

Moreland Primary School



Learning Outside the Classroom Policy 22-23

Learning outside the Classroom policy

Rationale

At Moreland our aim is to provide the very best education and the most exciting opportunities to inspire our children. The curriculum we offer is bespoke and is based upon our 'Learning for Life' vision which is central to every decision we make.

'Reaching higher than I dreamed, becoming the person that I want to be, doing the best I can for the world and for me'.

At Moreland our inspiring curriculum is all about developing creative, critical thinkers who are equipped with the confidence, ability and desire to make the world a better place. Children are given opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills through a wide variety of learning experiences.

The 4 key competencies that we focus on are:

1. **Communication** – understanding and communicating ideas
2. **Creativity** – thinking outside the box
3. **Critical Thinking** – solving problems
4. **Collaboration** – working with others

These key skills and competencies give children the means to successfully unlock learning and ensure they are prepared for the next stage of education.

At Moreland we believe it is vital that we maintain a creative, broad and balanced curriculum. This includes ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to experience a wide range of first hand experiences and take part in meaningful activities outside the classroom. Our school grounds provide rich opportunities to stimulate learning and promote health and well-being amongst our pupils. We believe that well planned outdoor experiences give children the opportunity to explore their learning in ways that support their classroom activities.

It is part of our core offer that children get as many opportunities to learn and develop outside of their classrooms and that they see the world as an extension of their classrooms, it is their outdoor classroom. Each class has at least one outdoor learning session a week.

All children have a right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. This is particularly important as [National Trust](#) research showed that children are playing outside for an average of just over four hours a week. This means that many children are missing out on the physical and mental benefits of being outdoors. We know that a lot of our children have limited experiences of being outdoors by Year 6 many have not had the chance to do many of the things on the National Trust "50 things to do before you're 11¾". We want to provide our children with the chance to connect and learn in nature and really experience what the outdoors has to offer.

Providing positive opportunities for active learning, the outdoor environment can provide a scaffold through which resilience, resourcefulness, and independence are fostered and one where creativity, curiosity and imagination is encouraged and valued.

Through our curriculum we will inspire children through positive learning outside the classroom experiences and provide them every opportunity to appreciate the wider, natural world to encourage a responsibility for nature conservation in later life.

What is learning outside the classroom?

‘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.’

‘Learning outside the classroom should be built into planning for all learners, every week and all year round. It is a powerful tool that is proven to raise attainment, bolster social, emotional and personal development and contributes to the health and well-being of children and young people.’

Council for Learning Outside the Classroom 2018

Aims

- To continuously raise attainment by meeting the learning needs of all pupils and enable them to make good progress.
- Where children have every opportunity to develop an inquisitive and positive relationship with the natural world.
- Children will have access to frequent, continuous and progressive experiences in the school grounds, educational visits further afield and residential trips in upper Key Stage 2. These experiences will be used as a tool for teaching, learning and delivering the curriculum across all subject areas where appropriate.
- We will continue to develop and evaluate a curriculum that is inclusive and reflective of a sustainable lifestyle and one that feeds our children’s imagination and stimulates their creativity.
- For pupils to develop their self-esteem, social skills, independence and resilience through experiencing the world beyond the classroom.

LOtC - Policy into Practice

We will offer the following entitlement to all pupils:

- Relevant, interesting topics and units of work which are planned by the staff and pupils and include many opportunities for LOtC.
- Motivational learning opportunities across the curriculum.
- Access to experts and educational places including museums, historical buildings and outdoor venues.
- Access to the local environment and the opportunity to explore, ask questions and express wonder.
- Progression in skills for learning both in and outside the classroom from Early Years to Year 6.
- The opportunity to attend at least 2 residential trips focused on developing skills, confidence and self-esteem.
- The opportunity to reflect on and celebrate learning.

- Regular opportunities to learn through practical experience- for example drama, outdoor adventure, indoor adventure, workshops.
- The opportunity to lead and take ownership of their learning.
- The opportunity to develop relationship skills for learning and life.

Provision for SEN and More -Able and Gifted and Talented Learners

All children are planned for and supported by staff when learning outside. Where needed activities and experiences are adapted to meet the needs of children.

We also have a range of extracurricular clubs that allow learners to develop their interests and skills across different areas, these clubs include drama, sports, arts and nature based clubs such as Forest School and gardening.

How we will deliver this.

- The **Curriculum overview** for each year group ensures that trips and events are timetabled annually.
- Expectations for learning from LOtC are known by all staff and used to plan activities which are progressive and build upon previous learning.
- Teacher's medium term plans and topic plans identify opportunities for LOtC. These activities are planned using national Curriculum objectives (see Topic knowledge organisers)
- At Moreland we make good use of expertise within our school team and make links with and develop partnerships with the local organisations within the wider community to enhance the range of provision and opportunities for our children.
- Teachers will identify pupils with particular needs for support during LOtC activities and plan accordingly.

Organising LOtC

- A LOtC coordinator has been appointed since September 2019.
- Learning outside the classroom is built into planning for all learners, every week and all year round.
- The curriculum half termly plan will identify opportunities for LOtC.
- Developing and improving LOtC is an integral part of the School Improvement plan.
- All classes have a series of LOtC opportunities that will enrich their experiences including trips, visitors and Forest school sessions.
- Activities will be planned linked to the curriculum.
- All parents sign a permission slip for local trips and field work and will be notified about additional trips.
- LOtC including Forest Schools has its own budget.
- Pupils are given opportunities to lead and take ownership of LOtC activities.
- All trips are planned using the Islington Evolve system.

Trips and Visits

All year groups have regular trips throughout the school year. These will be included in the curriculum planning and will support and expand opportunities for teaching and learning.

Trips and visits enhance and bring the curriculum alive, many of these trips are booked by the Head of school who ensures that there is coverage and progression and that stimulating, inspiring and relevant curriculum links are made. This system means that we can obtain sought after limited trips, it allows teachers to then risk assess trips thoroughly using Islington 'Evolve' system which is then authorised by the Head of school.

Use of the school grounds

The school grounds are our outdoor classroom. It is a resource used by all the school community. We aim to use it weekly to enhance and extend classroom learning. For example, it can be used:

- As a planned resource within the curriculum e.g. 'habitats', orienteering, outdoor English (e.g. storytelling) and practical numeracy activities, visual and performing arts (e.g. murals, sculptures, mosaics, music and drama), etc.
- As a resource to support other curriculum areas e.g. for sketching in art, as a stimulus for writing and Mathematics activities and problem solving.
- To support healthy school's initiatives e.g. physical activity and development using playground equipment, daily mile, gardening and cookery links.
- To support Eco schools and sustainability initiatives
- As a larger space for noisy and messy activities and investigations.
- For Forest School activities

The local community

A standard letter is sent out to parents requesting their permission for pupils to go on local trips and field work.

Parents and family members are encouraged to join in and take part with LOtC activities wherever possible and will be kept updated about events and activities.

Extra-curricular activities

A full range of after-school activities are provided on a weekly basis. These are led by a mixture of school staff and external individuals. The programme changes termly to reflect the seasons, the availability of staff and the interests of the children.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Staff will complete evaluation forms for trips and events to allow us to evaluate the impact of sessions.
- The LOtC coordinator will compile a portfolio of Learning outside the classroom and update this termly. It will provide opportunities to celebrate, share and inspire outdoor learning and provide opportunities for children to reflect back and discuss their previous experiences and learning.
- Examples of outdoor learning will be posted regularly on the school website, so that this can be shared with parents and the wider community.

- The LOtC coordinator will monitor the impact of LOtC activity and will develop an action plan for improvement as necessary, with the support of all staff.
- The LOtC will be available to support and share ideas with staff to continue to improve the quality and frequency of outdoor learning.

Health and Safety

At Moreland Primary School we believe that it is important that our outdoor learning environments offer challenges that give children the opportunity to extend their life skills, develop their confidence and foster their resilience and sense of responsibility as well as teaching them how to be safe and aware of others. Outdoor learning opportunities and risk assessments will therefore be assessed by staff.

Forest School

Each class will have the opportunity to take part in 6-8 forest school sessions with a Level 3 qualified Forest school lead. All activities are risk assessed and they are planned alongside the children, so that particular skills can be developed and their interests can be followed. Research has shown that children can benefit from Forest School programs in a variety of ways.

- **Confidence**
- **Social skills**
- **Communication**
- **Motivation**
- **Physical skills**
- **Knowledge and understanding:**
- **New perspectives**
- **Ripple effects**

(Murray & O'Brien, 2005, Jenner & Hughes, 2005)

It is also beneficial for children who are struggling academically and have elements of stress, trauma and complex family relationships. (McCree, Cutting & Sherwin, 2018) They studied the impact of long-term Forest School and found that children who attended showed improved signs of well-being, scored higher in assessments of maths, reading and writing than those who did not attend sessions and highlighted the importance of social free play outdoors and relationships with a particular place in establishing emotional resilience and self-regulation. (see Forest School policy for more details)

Chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs

As part of our commitment to enhancing our outdoor provision, we have three chickens, two rabbits and two guinea pigs. The children volunteer to be 'Junior Farmers' and have regular opportunities to observe the animals and they have the chance to help feed, collect eggs and clean out the animals alongside an adult. The animals have proved to be a beneficial addition to our school community and teach children about caring for living things and also develops a sense of responsibility.

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