

Westhead Lathom St. James
C.E. Primary School



"Christian values are implicit in all that we do"
Learning Outside the Classroom

Last Reviewed Date: Autumn 2016
Next Review Date: Autumn 2019

Issue No.	Date		Revision Notes
1	January 2016	Alison Albion	Original Policy documents copied into new format, with header, footer and version control and then personalised by Alison Albion

Signed..... Chair of Governors

Date.....

Mission Statement: Our School Now

Our school provides a secure, caring, stimulating and challenging indoor and outdoor environment that promotes a love of learning. Our children, parents, families, staff, governors and community work together to enable each child to become a happy, healthy, well-balanced individual in preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

The ethos of the school is based on the Christian ideals of commitment, responsibility and respect and love for Jesus Christ, self and others. We are committed to working in partnership with all of those involved in our children's development to lead our children towards tolerance, understanding, justice, and sensitivity to the needs of others and appreciation of the world around them.

Our motto "Enjoy, Respect, Learn, Achieve"

Vision Statement: Our Vision for the Future

- To provide role models who: go the extra mile; give of themselves and their time to meet the needs of the whole child; promote spirituality and an appreciation of the wonders of the natural world; promote a love of learning; develop Christian ideals of commitment, responsibility, respect, team-work, tolerance, understanding, justice, sensitivity of self and others and love for Jesus Christ, within a secure, caring, inspiring, stimulating and challenging environment both indoors and outside.
- For children, parents, families, staff, governors and community to work together in partnership to enable each child to become a happy, healthy, well-balanced individuals with self-confidence and belief that builds character to enable them to engage thoroughly, fulfilling each individual's potential through life's experiences, opportunities and responsibilities in a rapidly changing world.

Aims

Westhead Lathom St. James Church of England Primary School aims to :-

- Provide a broad and challenging curriculum and a stimulating learning environment that extends outside the classroom;
- Develop enquiring minds and spirituality through curiosity, awe and wonder of the world;
- Teach, demonstrate and praise Christian Values;
- Value the power of prayer;
- Teach with innovative and investigative approaches to learning;
- Provide an enriching programme of extra-curricular activities and visits;
- Plan a rich, varied and up-to-date range of learning resources;
- Encourage children to achieve their highest standards in all areas of the curriculum and to seek excellence within an ethos of support, challenge and encouragement to succeed;
- Teach children to work independently, collaboratively and become highly motivated lifelong learners;
- Include opportunities for creative thinking in problem solving settings, developing divergent thinking, adaptability and flexibility in preparation for the many changes ahead in life, including the rapid progress in technology;
- Build partnerships between the school, home and community;
- Strive for continuous improvement in all that we do;
- Continually self-evaluate and continue to improve upon current practice;
- Work collaboratively towards common goals;
- Place self-esteem and a positive and inclusive approach to behaviour as high priorities thus ensuring that individuals respect and value themselves, others and the environment and is motivated to do their best in school and beyond in order to become a fulfilled adult who gives to the community.

Introduction

Excellent teaching gives children life chances they deserve.

Enjoyment is the birthright of every child. Children learn better when they are excited and engaged – but what excites and engages them best is truly excellent teaching, which challenges them and shows them what they can do. When there is joy in what they are doing, they learn to love learning. Excellence and Enjoyment (DCSF-2003)

Our Learning Outside the Classroom Policy aims to foster children's love of learning. At Westhead Lathom St James CE School, we believe that all children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. We further believe that it is important to enable children to use the outside environment as a context for learning.

What do we mean by Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC)?

LOtC is a broad term that includes: outdoor play (learning through play), school grounds projects, environmental education, recreational and adventure activities, personal and social development, and more. Outdoor Learning does not have a clearly defined boundary but it does have a common core.

LOtC 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 cooperative learning – to name only some of the benefits.

Learning Outside the Classroom can help to bring learning alive. For that reason the outdoors can have an impact on areas of the curriculum as diverse as imaginative writing and personal and social development. LOtC also provides experiential opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.

Benefits of Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC):

- LOtC helps to ensure that children are successful learners enabling children 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 young children's attitudes, beliefs and self perceptions.
- LOtC contributes towards creating independent learners with high self esteem 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 learners attainment, promotes and strengthens communication skills, team work and sense of cohesion.
- There is clear evidence that boys in particular are more active in their learning in an outdoor environment.

Aims and Objectives of this policy:

- To raise the profile of Learning Outside the Classroom.
- To empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing their minds and bodies to thrive.
- To encourage children to develop the skills to solve problems, developing resilient and reflective learners.
- To develop skills of communication, cooperation 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 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.

Health and Safety

We will support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. Pupils will be 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. LOtC opportunities will be grasped when available and teachers will assess risk.

In the first instance the schools policies relating to Health and Safety and Risk Assessment should be referred to and applied prior to any LOtC 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. We will therefore discuss with parents their views regarding outdoor learning – and the degrees of risk that apply to the varying activities.

Our children are taught to manage risks in regard to LOtC. All pupils are regularly reminded about the importance of staying safe. Be Safe is a school expectation and children are

reminded of the importance of keeping themselves and members of the school community safe.

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 expectation Be Safe at all times when we participate in outdoor learning.
- We must never go to the school field without an adult!
- We must always walk on the path at the rear of school and be aware that cars may approach through the un-named road.
- We must never walk across the car park area without an adult.
- We must not encourage dogs to approach us as we cross the council field to our school field.
- We must stay with our group.
- We must always ensure that we close all doors and gates behind us.
- We must never open the gates to visitors.
- We must be sensible and ensure that we achieve our learning objectives.
- We follow the safety rules and guidance for each lesson.
- Only teachers may open padlocked gates.

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

Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment of the children's learning will be valued equally indoors and outdoors and should be part of the same process.

Policy Review

This policy should be considered alongside other relevant policies. It will be reviewed by the governing body as part of its schedule of policy review.

Managing the delivery of Outdoor Learning

Through the monitoring of teaching and learning e.g. forward planning meetings, classroom observation, 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 Westhead Lathom St James CE School.

We provide support and professional development to enable staff to feel confident developing the expertise or knowledge base to adapt their practice to include opportunities

for learning beyond the confines of the classroom. We encourage children to be more resilient about weather conditions.

Our Commitment to Outdoor Learning.

We are currently in the process of further improving outdoor learning areas, to include a woodland walk area, a wild flower and butterfly garden, a willow tunnel, a music area, a quiet area and improving our forestry area. Lady birds are using their mud kitchen. The pupils have been designing our woodland walk area and butterfly/ wild flower garden.

At Westhead Lathom St James CE School, we have developed links with two local garden centres, an award winning landscape gardener, Southport Flower Show and the National Wildflower Centre in Childwall, Liverpool. Recently, a member of our gardening club won first prize in the garden design section and her design was built for the Southport Flower Show. Her prize money was donated to the further improvement of our outdoor facilities. We will continue to build upon these for the benefit of all of our children.

We advocate that the pace of learning can be enhanced by using the outdoors. There is clear evidence that boys in particular, are more active in their learning in an outdoor environment.

The school will communicate the benefits to parents and the wider community of Learning Outside the Classroom so that there is a greater understanding of its value and importance and provide a greater awareness of the safety standards the school adopts.

Where should Outdoor Learning take place?

The school grounds

We are exceptionally fortunate to have our own developing forestry area in our grounds, including a fire area, even though they are not adjacent to our school building, which offer excellent opportunities for both formal and informal learning and play.

The local environment

The locality around our school harbours a wealth of opportunities within relatively accessible distance. Learners can develop their skills to explore their local environment.

Residential places

Staying away from home is a powerful way of developing key life skills, building confidence, self esteem, communication and team working, for example. This provides children with an opportunity to widen their range of experiences and find new skills and interests in which they may excel. Annual residential visits with another school to Min-Y-Don Christian Outdoor Adventure Centre provides spectacular opportunities for all aspects of outdoor learning. Pupil Premium children receive a substantial subsidy to enable them to attend every year.

Able Children

Learning Outside the Classroom offers opportunities for children to engage in extended research, with the intention of developing a greater student understanding of the natural world; through the rigours of scientific enquiry, good thinking skills, and a strong understanding of learning processes understanding of learning processes.

The programme also allows opportunities to access discussion on a moral code, ethics, humanity, sustainability, science in its widest sense, problems pertaining to globalisation and philosophical enquiry.

Learning Outside the Classroom acts as a bridge to higher order learning and opportunities to challenge misconceptions and ways of thinking.