



High Quality Outdoor Learning

A Guide For Educational Settings



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Foreword

Welcome to High Quality Outdoor Learning

Outdoor learning is a rich, transformative approach to education that reaches far beyond simply relocating lessons to a different setting. At its heart, it is about personal, social, emotional, and intellectual growth through meaningful engagement with the natural world. Whether it's a child laying a table during a residential, a group singing around a fire, or a class carrying out a river study, the power of outdoor learning lies in its ability to foster connection: with self, with others, and with the environment.

Schools and other educational settings, through inspiring lessons delivered by passionate teachers and practitioners, provide a critical pathway to helping all learners access the benefits of the outdoors. Children and young people learn from those who guide them, and meaningful outdoor experiences help them value and enjoy the natural world, developing relationships and learning new skills and knowledge that can have a lasting impact. These experiences build not only individual resilience and connection but also strengthen social capital, benefiting families, communities, and society. Ultimately, enabling children and young people to grow through outdoor learning helps nurture more connected, resilient, and environmentally conscious individuals.

Whether you are a seasoned practitioner or just taking your first steps, this guide will help you consolidate and develop your outdoor learning practice.



Brian Kitson,
Chair of IOL Trustees



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The Institute for Outdoor Learning is the professional body for organisations and individuals who use the outdoors to make a positive difference for others. IOL is driven by a vision of outdoor learning as a highly valued form of development, education and employment in UK society, and our members have a shared vision of outdoor learning as a highly valued form of development, education and employment in UK society.



Introduction

The benefits of outdoor learning are widely understood and supported by an ever-increasing volume of evidence.¹ This guide is specifically focused on education settings. It is designed to help leaders, teachers, practitioners and support staff create the conditions for outdoor learning to flourish, recognise high quality practice, and evaluate the resulting outcomes.

Definition

There are many definitions of outdoor learning. In this guide outdoor learning is defined as:

‘planned and purposeful learning experiences that predominantly take place in the natural environment’.

It can include related classroom activity, activities in the school grounds and visits further afield, as well as expeditions and residential. Although the natural environment is often a key factor, the built and heritage environments also offer stimulating settings for learning and growth, to which this guide also applies.

Settings include schools, nurseries, forest schools, alternative provision, pupil referral units, colleges, etc.

Acknowledgements

This guide has been compiled for the IOL by Dr Dave Harvey with support from Clive Atkins, Jo Barnett and Jake Wiid (EVOLVE Advice). It is based on the IOL publication [‘High Quality Outdoor Learning’](#) drawing on sector standards, evaluations, reports, conference workshops and academic research. It expands and develops the previous High Quality Outdoor Learning guide, published by the English Outdoor Council in 2015, and acknowledges the work of members of the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel who wrote the original EOC publication High Quality Outdoor Education in 2005.

¹: See [High Quality Outdoor Learning](#)



Using the guide

Many settings already deliver aspects of their curriculum through outdoor learning approaches, yet may not recognise it as such. This guide will help you to identify aspects of good practice in place already, as well as areas where some simple changes can lead to big improvements.

The approach taken to outdoor learning will be unique to a particular setting. The settings' context, the learners' needs, school priorities and external constraints will all influence how outdoor learning approaches are viewed and implemented. There is no fixed guidance on what it should look like, so readers are invited to use the information in this guide as a basis for planning and review. We also recommend researching local/national guidance relating to outdoor learning in your particular setting.

The guide is split into three sections:

» **Part 1 – Conditions for success:**

The systems, culture, behaviours and relationships that enable successful delivery to take place.

» **Part 2 – High quality practice:**

The planning, delivery and assessment of learning experiences.

» **Part 3 – Evaluating outcomes:**

The identifiable changes in an individual or group as a result of the activity / programme.



Part 1

Creating the
conditions for
outdoor learning
to flourish

Outdoor learning has the greatest impact when it is part of a whole school approach.

Benefits of a whole school approach include:

- » All learners being able to access the benefits of outdoor learning.
- » Improved learner engagement, especially for those who do not thrive in a classroom setting.
- » Regular and sustained engagement with the natural environment leading to health benefits and improved nature connection.
- » More opportunities for creativity, emotional regulation and physical activity.
- » Established links to curriculum progression.
- » More opportunities to promote teacher wellbeing.
- » Shared CPD that has an impact across the whole setting.
- » A sustainable, coordinated approach, built into the development plan, that is not dependent on a lone champion.
- » SLT support and validation for staff.
- » Opportunities to engage parents / carers and the wider community.
- » A shared approach to learning, teaching, resources and quality.

“Outdoor learning has the greatest impact when it is part of a whole school approach.”

Underpinning a whole school approach are the systems, culture, behaviours and relationships that enable delivery to happen. Linking these factors is a common strategy that combines a whole school vision for outdoor learning and action plan with the skills, knowledge and resources to deliver it. Senior leadership team support ensures that the motivation and incentives are in place to enable progress and success.



The conditions for success

- ✓ Supportive and enabling leadership
- ✓ Shared vision and goals
- ✓ Appropriate resources
- ✓ Suitable staff training
- ✓ Coordinated approach

What does high quality practice look like?

A shared vision

Settings should have a vision statement that:

- ✓ Is achieved by consensus.
- ✓ Describes the future.
- ✓ Channels decision making processes to keep focus.
- ✓ Helps to articulate strategy internally and externally.
- ✓ Helps guide and motivate staff.

To reach a shared vision, staff should:

- ✓ Start with the 'why' and develop a whole school vision that reflects context:
 - Why is outdoor learning important for our students, staff and school?
 - What are the goals for using outdoor learning in our school?
 - How will we measure progress and success?
- ✓ Ask what outdoor learning means in your setting? Agree a definition that reflects your ambitions and context.

Example vision statement

We believe that all learners should experience learning beyond the classroom. By purposely learning in different environments, our aim is to develop their resilience, confidence, independence, and self-awareness, which in turn contributes to our goal of thinking, feeling, questioning learners who are able to make a positive contribution to school and the wider community.

For our staff, we aim for them to be confident and skilled in identifying the value of different environments and be capable of choosing them as places to take learners for stimulating experiences.

Skills, knowledge and resources

Taking learning outdoors may require additional skills, knowledge and resources, but there may already be much in place.

- ✓ Audit what exists already - staff skills, knowledge, confidence, who is doing what, what venues are used.
- ✓ Prioritise what is needed to move forward.
- ✓ Source funding to help build skills, knowledge and resources.

Action planning

A SMART² action plan is essential to avoid false starts and an uncoordinated approach. It should be based on what is needed to meet the vision and the results of the audits. Ideally, outdoor learning will feature in the school improvement plan where clear goals and a realistic time frame for implementation will create the conditions for steady progress and success. With a plan in place, it can be implemented first using existing and manageable resources through:

- ✓ Starting with small easy steps
- ✓ Agreeing achievable targets
- ✓ Building confidence, skills & knowledge
- ✓ Building in support
- ✓ Celebrating achievements
- ✓ Sharing learning
- ✓ Communicating - with parents, school community, governors / trustees
- display boards, events, updates, feedback opportunities

Motivation

Developing a whole school approach to outdoor learning requires a coordinated approach with senior leadership support. Staff may need support to address fears, alleviate concerns over learner assessment and help with creative ways of evidencing practice. Celebrating success, sharing good practice and promoting outdoor learning pedagogy and practice will all help to encourage and empower staff.

- ✓ What opportunities exist for development?
- ✓ Can outdoor learning have a slot on the regular staff meeting agenda?
- ✓ Are there opportunities to share learning or for more experienced staff to support their colleagues?
- ✓ Can staff gain recognition / qualifications for outdoor learning?
- ✓ Can learners gain awards and recognition related to outdoor learning?

Part 2

High Quality Practice

As with all forms of teaching, coaching, instructing and facilitation, the skills and knowledge to be an effective outdoor learning practitioner must be developed over time. The following indicators of high quality practice are based on teaching, coaching and youth work standards from the UK and beyond.

Read about the essential components of high quality outdoor learning:

1. Safety management and safeguarding.
2. Equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.
3. The importance of effective and meaningful relationships.
4. Environmental awareness and sustainability.
5. An understanding of what the intended outcomes are and how the activities will contribute to those goals (a 'theory of change').
6. An understanding of continuity and progression.



Planning

Planning of high quality outdoor learning practice should consider:

- » Setting objectives – why are you using outdoor learning to achieve this?
 - If it's curricular – how does the outdoor setting add value to the learning?
 - If it's wider curriculum – what are you hoping to achieve?
- » The desired outcomes:
 - Curriculum
 - Personal and social development
 - Wider curriculum
 - Environmental / Nature connection
 - Physical / mental / emotional health
- » What learners should be able to do as a result of the session/programme.

Enjoyment is a key motivator for learning and engagement and is more likely if certain conditions are met.

- » Are the activities stimulating and appropriate for learners' age/stage of development?
- » Are learners prepared for the current activity?
- » Do learners feel safe?
- » Do learners know what is expected of them and what is going to happen?
- » Are learners physically and mentally able to cope with the environment/activity?
- » Are staff aware of the risks involved with the activity and have appropriate strategies to mitigate them?
- » Have additional needs and concerns been taken into account?
- » Are appropriate resources in place?
- » What is Plan B if the weather or other events mean that the original plan is inappropriate?

New to outdoor learning? Taking small steps will foster success and build confidence.

- ✓ Choose an activity you know.
- ✓ Involve other staff if possible – they may have more experience that you can draw on.
- ✓ Pick a nice day, and don't be afraid to cancel it or limit the time outdoors if conditions or the group dictate.
- ✓ Involve the learners in the process (not just the activity).
- ✓ Use routines and boundaries that are already established (e.g. through Physical Education).
- ✓ Consider subjects that are easy to connect with the outdoors (e.g. Geography and Science).

Remember that you already have the teaching skills – it's just a different environment. Keep to areas of the grounds that you are familiar and comfortable with initially, then increase the complexity / range as your confidence builds.



Managing learning

Where high quality outdoor learning practice is taking place, staff focus on activity, participation and involvement by ensuring that:

- ✓ Instructions are clear and understood.
- ✓ Demonstrations are clear and effective.
- ✓ Learners have a chance to ask questions.
- ✓ Facilitation approaches vary according to need.
- ✓ Learners are actively engaged with the session for the majority of the time.
- ✓ Where appropriate, opportunities for independent learning are offered.
- ✓ Where appropriate, opportunities for leadership are offered.
- ✓ Where appropriate, learners experience increasing autonomy, taking responsibility for their engagement and learning.
- ✓ By understanding what the wider learning context could be, appropriate pace, momentum and flow are maintained.
- ✓ Unplanned opportunities for learning are taken when presented & appropriate for the situation.
- ✓ Needs and wants are managed appropriately.
- ✓ Learners have opportunities to achieve based on their individual aspirations and capabilities.
- ✓ Learners are challenged appropriately and supported to overcome fears.



Assessing learning

Where high quality outdoor learning practice is taking place -

Participants have opportunities to demonstrate learning/understanding through:

- ✓ Independent activity in the session.
- ✓ Discussion both during and at the end of the session.
- ✓ Behaviours.
- ✓ Taking on additional responsibility and leadership opportunities.
- ✓ Sharing knowledge (verbal, written, performance, coaching others, etc.).
- ✓ Demonstrating values.
- ✓ Taking on new challenges with increasing levels of autonomy.

Staff feedback to learners:

- ✓ Through appropriate use of praise and encouragement.
- ✓ Offering support and correction where appropriate.

Consolidating learning

Where high quality outdoor learning practice is taking place, staff:

- ✓ Review, to encourage retention and recall.
- ✓ Help learners realise what they have achieved and what they might do next.
- ✓ Connect forwards, supporting onwards progression.

Learners:

- ✓ Have appropriate opportunities to reflect on their experiences.
- ✓ Have the opportunity to review and articulate their experiences in a safe environment.
- ✓ Have the opportunity to make meaning from their experiences, and, where relevant, relate these to real life experiences elsewhere, e.g. at home, school, in the community.
- ✓ Can make connections between what they are currently doing or have done, and what has gone before and is yet to come.

The BASICS model (Figure 1)

Addressing diversity, inclusion and equity can be, for many staff, a journey that involves self-discovery as well as changes to practice. For participants, the sense of belonging they experience within the group or setting will reflect how successful inclusion strategies are. The BASICS model (Belonging, Aspiration, Safety, Identity, Challenge and Success) offers one way of gauging success from a learner perspective.

Do participants feel a sense of Belonging, Aspiration, Safety, Identity, Challenge, and Success?

Belonging

- » Do they feel listened to?
- » Do they feel respected as individuals?
- » Do they feel valued?
- » Are they asked for their opinion? And does that opinion matter?

Aspirations

- » Do they feel that the learning has a purpose?
- » Do they understand why they are doing the activity?
- » Are there meaningful and realistic goals and targets?
- » Do they buy into those goals and targets?
- » Do they have an understanding of the 'big picture' about the session and not just what is going to happen next?

Safety

- » Do they feel comfortable and safe within the group and the environment?
- » Do they feel safe emotionally?
- » Do they feel safe physically?
- » Do they feel safe psychologically?

Identity

- » Are they helped to learn things about themselves in a supportive and positive way?
- » Are they allowed to be themselves?
- » Is there an atmosphere that promotes and celebrates success?

Challenge

- » Are they bored? Are they terrified? Or are they experiencing an appropriate level of challenge and achievement?
- » Is there an alternative if they would prefer to opt out?

Success

- » Do they receive meaningful praise when they succeed and guidance if they are struggling?
- » Do they get to experience success as part of the session or sequence?
- » Do they recognise success?

Figure 1. The BASICS model (based on Smith, 1996)³

Part 3

Evaluating Outcomes

Evaluating the success of outdoor learning approaches and sessions helps to:

- » Demonstrate progress and impact
- » Increase learner motivation
- » Ensure that all learners are being challenged and supported appropriately
- » Improve practitioners' understanding and practice
- » Refine and improve programmes for the future
- » Justify investment and approach to stakeholders

Successful outcomes are interlinked with, and a measure of, effective, high quality outdoor learning practice. They can be formalised as intended goals, assessed as part of a particular scheme of work, or achieved in other ways resulting from the individual learner's interpretation of the experience. Some unintended outcomes can be negative of course, and may be beyond the control of the practitioner, and it is important to acknowledge this possibility as part of planning for the activity. Considering the positive learning environment, listening to learners' concerns, and addressing issues as they arise all contribute to reduced likelihood of negative experiences and greater chances of meeting intended outcomes.

Some elements of outdoor learning experiences may be important in enabling the achievement of more distant goals. Enjoyment or achievement experienced through outdoor learning experiences, for example, may be the key to longer term engagement in education, understanding personal health and self-awareness, or to developing healthy relationships with others or the natural environment. Similarly, for learners to be able to access the curriculum objectives, they may need skills and ways of working that have to be taught first. Outdoor skills associated with looking after oneself and being able to navigate, for example, come before using orienteering as a means of teaching other subject content.

Being clear about both what can be achieved and what has been achieved provides a pathway to greater effectiveness and an increased likelihood of success.

Not all outcomes will be achieved - or achievable - with every session, or with every practitioner and learner, but being clear about both what can be achieved and what has been achieved provides a pathway to greater effectiveness and an increased likelihood of success. The choice of activities, conversations and approaches that are most likely to achieve success can only be made once the desired outcomes are identified. Assessing whether those outcomes have been met helps practitioners to both prove the value of the experience and improve their own practice.

Evaluation varies in scale and focus. For example, the focus may be on specific lesson objectives, the overall experience of a residential, or whole-school objectives for the outdoor learning strategy. This is where the vision is important – if there is a specific focus of outdoor learning, it makes sense to evaluate success against criteria that support that objective.

Assessing outcomes

As well as specific subject related outcomes, many curricula share similar developmental goals for their learners, fostering:

- » Healthy, confident individuals.
- » Sociable, connected and active participants.
- » Successful, lifelong learners.
- » Creative and enterprising contributors.
- » Responsible, ethical citizens.

For all activities, staff need to understand the intended outcomes in order to gauge how successful the session has been in helping learners achieve them. Outcomes may be curriculum/enquiry linked or more focused on personal and social development, but as many activities can lead to opportunities for both, prioritising the focus may be necessary.

Curricular goals:

- » Use existing assessment methods. If curricular goals are the focus, then adopting similar strategies used in the classroom can be straightforward to implement. If the outdoor learning session begins in the classroom, practitioners can introduce the session content with reference to previous learning, before contextualizing it outside. Subsequently, bringing the session back inside allows learners to decontextualize it again and record what they have done in their books, through displays and artefacts, and/or in discussion.
- » Using digital technology outside offers straightforward ways to capture evidence of performances, artefacts, skills and knowledge.
- » Teaching others, whether younger pupils, their peers or even adults, demonstrates learning and application of knowledge.
- » Learners can also demonstrate knowledge and skill by being involved in developing future outdoor learning sessions, e.g. through risk assessment, equipment preparation, etc.

Personal and social development goals:

While curriculum focused outcomes related to skills and knowledge can be relatively straightforward to assess, personal and social development may require a different approach. High quality outdoor learning can help to achieve a range of personal and social development outcomes (Figure 2), all of which have a set of indicators (pages 21-30).

Using the indicators of high quality outdoor learning:

1. Select the outcomes you are focusing on (see Section 2 – planning). Although there may be several potential outcomes it is worth considering which ones you particularly want to focus on and which ones you want to assess progress against.
2. Select key indicators for those outcomes. Keep it simple. Two or three indicators per identified outcome should be enough. These indicators will help you decide what success looks like.
3. Decide how to evaluate the outcomes, for example through:
 - ✓ Teacher or peer observation
 - ✓ Direct questioning – relevant to the intended outcomes
 - ✓ Discussion of the intended outcomes
 - ✓ Learners demonstrating learning through performance
4. Decide whether you need to gather evidence. If so, how will you capture the learning? For example:
 - ✓ Learners making a video or producing an artefact/display/assembly.
 - ✓ Surveys and scales (e.g. wellbeing scales, nature connection, behaviour profiles, etc.)
 - ✓ Physical continuum – where are you in relation to...
 - ✓ 'I can...' statements to capture self-perceptions.
 - ✓ Keeping class books recording what's been going on.
 - ✓ Audio and video recordings of performances, etc.
 - ✓ Curriculum linked pieces of work.

Following up: staff self-evaluation

- » How did the session(s) go?
- » Did you achieve what you intended?
- » Was there any unintended learning?
- » What would you keep the same or change next time?
- » Can you share your learning with other colleagues?

The outcomes of high quality outdoor learning

- 1. Health and wellbeing.** Learning to appreciate the benefits of physical fitness and the lifelong value of participation in healthy active leisure activities.
- 2. Social and emotional awareness.** Developing their self-awareness and social skills, and their appreciation of the contributions and achievements of themselves and of others.
- 3. Environmental awareness.** Becoming receptive to the natural environment and understanding the importance of conservation and pro environmental behaviour.
- 4. Positive learning experiences.** Developing a positive attitude to challenge, learning and adventure.
- 5. Confidence and character.** Developing personal confidence and character through taking on challenges and achieving success.
- 6. Skills and knowledge.** Acquiring and developing a range of skills and knowledge as a result of, and in support of, their participation in outdoor activities, recreation and exploration.
- 7. Personal qualities.** Demonstrating increased initiative, self-reliance, responsibility, perseverance, tenacity and commitment.
- 8. Skills for life.** Developing and extending their key skills of communication, problem-solving, leadership and teamwork.
- 9. Increased motivation and appetite for learning.** Displaying an increased motivation and appetite for learning that is contributing to raised levels of achievement and progress in other aspects of their development.
- 10. Broadened horizons.** Broadening their horizons and becoming aware of a wider range of recreation and employment opportunities and life chances, life choices and lifestyles.

Outcome 1

Health and well-being

Learners are learning to appreciate the benefits of physical fitness and the lifelong value of participation in healthy active leisure activities.

Indicators

If you are providing high quality outdoor learning, most learners should be meeting or progressing towards some of the following indicators:

The participants you work with:

- » Understand the benefits of keeping themselves fit through regular physical activity.
- » Are aware of the benefits of spending time in 'green' and 'blue' spaces.
- » Are aware of the links between, and importance of, physical and emotional well-being.
- » Have or are developing a positive self-image.
- » Talk about the benefits to their mental, physical and emotional health through spending time in nature and participation in outdoor activities.
- » Understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, including healthy eating appropriate to the demands of their activities.
- » Walk, wheel or cycle, where this is a realistic and appropriate option, or take other regular exercise.
- » Want to continue their interest in outdoor activities beyond their current experience and throughout their life.
- » Independently participate in follow-up opportunities where these are available.
- » Understand how much exercise is required to remain healthy.

Developing practice

What opportunities or support does your setting provide in order for learners to further their engagement with the natural environment through outdoor activities?

Outcome 2

Social and emotional awareness

Learners are developing their self-awareness and social skills, and their appreciation of the contributions and achievements of themselves and of others.

Indicators

If you are providing high quality outdoor learning, most learners should be meeting or progressing towards some of the following indicators:

The participants you work with:

- » Are learning to recognise their own and others' strengths and current limitations, valuing the contribution of others.
- » Are learning to or can manage their emotions.
- » Are able to ask for help if they need it.
- » Are developing the ability to relate to others with empathy and compassion.
- » Are able and willing to trust others and accept their support, while also recognising when others need support and willingly offer theirs.
- » Treat others with tolerance and respect, challenging intolerance when necessary.
- » Understand how their own actions impact on others.
- » Recognise and modify any aspects of behaviour that adversely affect others or their environment.
- » Recognise and applaud the achievements of others, regardless of how these compare with their own.
- » Are developing, managing and valuing friendships.
- » Are developing the ability to form relationships with people beyond their friendship groups.
- » Take on roles of responsibility for planning and organising activities, e.g. by fulfilling the role of junior or assistant leaders.
- » Take responsibility for their own safety as well as that of others.
- » Respect others' personal space, property and feelings.

Developing practice

How can outdoor learning opportunities contribute to personal, social, health and economic education goals of your learners?

Outcome 3

Environmental awareness

Learners are becoming receptive to the natural environment and understand the importance of conservation and environmentally sustainable behaviour.

Indicators

If you are providing high quality outdoor learning, most learners should be meeting or progressing towards some of the following indicators:

The participants you work with:

- » Have regular access to the outdoors as a learning resource.
- » Appreciate the benefits of spending time in nature.
- » Are comfortable and confident in the natural environment.
- » Experience a range of different environments in different conditions.
- » Are developing and nurturing a meaningful connection with nature.
- » Value the interrelatedness of humans and nature.
- » Understand the impact of human activities on the environment.
- » Are aware of issues around sustainability, climate change and biodiversity.
- » Are familiar with opportunities to access green and blue spaces in their own locality.
- » Know about pro-environmental actions they can take to protect and enhance nature.
- » Demonstrate care for the environment through their own actions (e.g. green recreation, leave no trace).
- » Are keen to participate in conservation activities.
- » Develop an interest in wider issues of sustainable development.
- » Appreciate and draw inspiration from the natural environment (e.g. in oral or written reflection, artwork or photography).
- » Experience and gain respect for the power of natural forces (e.g. wind and waves).
- » Understand the impact of the activities on the local environment and economy.
- » Have opportunities to experience 'awe and wonder' in response to the natural beauty of wild environments.
- » Appreciate the value of their local area for learning and recreation as well as places further afield.

Developing practice

How do you ensure that all your learners get regular access to the natural environment?

Outcome 4

Positive learning experiences

Learners are developing a positive attitude to challenge, learning and adventure.

Indicators

If you are providing high quality outdoor learning, most learners should be meeting or progressing towards some of the following indicators:

The participants you work with:

- » Experience memorable and significant moments of learning.
- » Can see the positives even when faced with challenges.
- » Have, or are working towards having, control of their own learning.
- » Achieve a degree of competence or mastery in the experiences or activities they undertake.
- » Achieve success through meaningful challenges.
- » Feel safe through a sense of belonging.
- » Know if they want to repeat experiences either now or after review and reflection.
- » Make reasoned choices about how they engage meaningfully with activities.
- » Are learning how to manage feedback.
- » Have a growth mindset.
- » Would like to participate in the activity or engage with the outdoors voluntarily in their free time.
- » Reflect on and talk about their experiences, positively and with enthusiasm.
- » Encourage their peers to take part, are keen to find out how to progress further (e.g. by joining a club).

Developing practice

What opportunities exist (or could exist) for your learners to experience challenge and adventure?

Outcome 5

Confidence and character

Learners are developing personal confidence and character through taking on challenges and achieving success.

Indicators

If you are providing high quality outdoor learning, most learners should be meeting or progressing towards some of the following indicators:

The participants you work with:

- » Overcome their apprehensions to take part in new opportunities, experiences and challenging activities.
- » Want a second go at things they find challenging first time around.
- » Show determination and perseverance to achieve their goals.
- » Develop resilience through perseverance where before they felt they could not succeed.
- » Feel proud of what they have achieved.
- » Want to move forward to the next challenge.
- » Talk openly about their successes and their failures.
- » Can recognise, reflect on and learn from their mistakes.
- » Can apply learning from one setting to another.
- » Feel positive about themselves – have a ‘can-do’ attitude.
- » Display increased social confidence – ‘come out of their shell’.
- » Feel they can make a positive contribution to the success of their group, school, club or community.
- » Are able to recognise how they can modify their behaviour to overcome future challenges both in the outdoors and in their everyday lives.

Developing practice

What opportunities do you provide to enable your learners to talk about their experiences, to you, to each other, their parents etc?

Outcome 6

Skills and knowledge

Learners are acquiring and developing a range of skills and knowledge resulting from, and in support of, their participation in outdoor activities, recreation and exploration.

Indicators

If you are providing high quality outdoor learning, most learners should be meeting or progressing towards some of the following indicators:

The participants you work with:

- » Understand the need for appropriate planning when undertaking outdoor activities.
- » Know how to dress appropriately for outdoor activities according to the conditions and level of challenge.
- » Understand how to keep themselves comfortable when outdoors in a variety of environments.
- » Appreciate the impact of the weather on their participation.
- » Develop physical skills that they adapt and apply effectively in outdoor activities.
- » Develop relevant mental skills (e.g. determination, co-operation, resilience, reflection).
- » Know how to assess potential risk and make appropriate decisions.
- » Develop their understanding of theoretical concepts through practical application.
- » Acquire environmental knowledge and ecosystems awareness.
- » Recognise the value of training and practice to develop and refine skills.
- » Are aware of relevant countryside and access codes of practice.
- » Are aware of the potential benefits and challenges associated with using digital technology in the outdoors.
- » Respond positively in challenging environments (e.g. darkness, inclement weather).
- » Know the value of seeking and accepting additional coaching input to improve performance.
- » Recognise the value of competition as a potential spur to high performance.

Developing practice

How do you plan for and enable learner progression in outdoor activities?

Outcome 7

Personal qualities

Learners are demonstrating increased initiative, self-reliance, responsibility, perseverance, tenacity and commitment.

Indicators

If you are providing high quality outdoor learning, most learners should be meeting or progressing towards some of the following indicators:

The participants you work with:

- » Are developing increased self-awareness and positive self-regard.
- » Are actively involved in the planning of their outdoor activities.
- » Arrive on time, properly equipped and prepared for activities.
- » Set their own goals relevant to the activities.
- » Undertake appropriate tasks with reducing levels of supervision and increasing independence.
- » Demonstrate initiative in overcoming obstacles to their progress.
- » Work towards self-reliance in outdoor adventure/challenge (e.g. unaccompanied expeditions).
- » Try hard to succeed at activities they find physically or emotionally challenging.
- » Set realistic targets for themselves over an extended period and keep focused until they succeed.
- » Persevere with good humour in the face of discomfort (e.g. fatigue or inclement weather).
- » Take responsibility for their own safety and that of others.
- » Take on positions of responsibility (e.g. as junior committee members).
- » Take care of their personal possessions, personal space and personal hygiene.
- » Think critically, questioning and challenging assumptions.

Developing practice

How are your learners involved in setting their own goals for activities or residential?

Outcome 8

Skills for life

Learners are developing and extending their key skills of communication, problem-solving, leadership and teamwork.

Indicators

If you are providing high quality outdoor learning, most learners should be meeting or progressing towards some of the following indicators:

The participants you work with:

- » Listen to instructions (e.g. safety briefings) and respond accordingly.
- » Come up with ideas and are able to express these.
- » Understand the importance of listening and responding respectfully to the ideas and opinions of others.
- » Work co-operatively and inclusively in planning activities and solving problems.
- » Are willing to try out a variety of ideas in order to find out which might work.
- » Vary and adapt what they do in response to changing circumstances.
- » Understand how team members take on different roles to achieve success.
- » Are able to take on positions of responsibility and leadership roles where appropriate.
- » Are able to step back and allow others to take the lead.
- » Are able to help their group arrive at a team decision and implement it.
- » Are able to reflect on and articulate their experiences.
- » Undertake training in first aid and outdoor skills at an appropriate level.

Developing practice

How do you build opportunities for leadership and taking responsibility into activities?

Outcome 9

Increased motivation and appetite for learning

Learners are displaying an increased motivation and appetite for learning that is contributing to raised levels of achievement and progress in other aspects of their development.

Indicators

If you are providing high quality outdoor learning, most learners should be meeting or progressing towards some of the following indicators:

The participants you work with:

- » Are curious about the world and open to new ideas and perspectives.
- » Set themselves challenging goals.
- » Always aim to achieve their best.
- » Have a desire to learn and are, or are becoming, self-motivated learners.
- » Show a desire for new challenges and learning experiences.
- » Have good or improving relationships with peers and people in positions of authority (e.g. teachers, youth workers, health workers, etc.).
- » Display good or improving behaviour.
- » Talk positively about learning and taking part in outdoor activities.
- » Know where to go to find out about opportunities and who can help to access them.
- » Have a good or improving record of commitment / attendance.
- » Demonstrate raised levels of attainment across the curriculum and beyond.
- » Participate in a variety of aspects of school/club/community/organisational life.
- » Draw inspiration from their outdoor activities in other subjects or areas of learning, e.g. creative writing, art, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Developing practice

How do you help your learners to make connections between success on activities and school/home life?

Outcome 10

Broadened horizons

Learners are broadening their horizons and becoming aware of a wider range of employment and volunteering opportunities and life chances, life choices and lifestyles.

Indicators

If you are providing high quality outdoor learning, most learners should be meeting or progressing towards some of the following indicators:

The participants you work with:

- » Are exposed to, and are becoming, more aware of different environments and cultures.
- » Are aware of the concepts of work-life balance and how to evaluate it.
- » Are becoming more open-minded.
- » Are aware of the opportunities available to them in their locality or community and are keen to seek experiences further afield.
- » Are able to apply their learning and skills in different contexts.
- » Perceive a wider range of career options open to them and talk positively about these.
- » Appreciate the workplace relevance of key skills such as communication and teamwork.
- » Appreciate the attractiveness to employers of self-reliance and commitment.
- » Are aware, if appropriate, of volunteering and employment opportunities in outdoor learning, outdoor recreation, and the pathways to these.
- » Are aware of opportunities to gain and use coaching qualifications in their chosen activity.
- » Respond to opportunities to volunteer their time to help others.
- » Know that they can continue to participate in outdoor and environmental activities, independent expeditions or travel after they leave your setting.
- » Always aim higher and aspire to achieve in life to their fullest potential.

Developing practice

How does the outdoor learning activity you are delivering contribute to broadening your learners' horizons?



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Photos with thanks to Karl Midlane, UK Youth, David Watts and Nene Park Trust

Our thanks go to EVOLVE Advice for supporting the development of HQOL: A guide for Educational Establishments.

