

## Strategy

If there are objectives that can be reliably delivered from participation in activities outside of the classroom then they need to be planned for. That planning should begin at the strategic level so that an appropriate and effective range of experience to meet the varied need is on offer. In fact it will be hard to deliver inclusive all round opportunity that clearly supports the wholistic learning programme without a steer as to what is encouraged, meets need and may yet need to be developed. Without a strategic overview its almost impossible to see how any realistic evaluation of the impact of the whole effort can be undertaken. Setting out aims and objectives will drive the subsequent planning for the quality that is sort from each individual trip. Although it is possible to set about change from the ground level its is so much more effective if it comes from a well intentioned top down. The sheer effort put into planning and managing educational activities offsite in itself more than merits the time taken to ensure that the benefits are thought through carefully.

For those staff who might be charged with providing a strategy guide the following factors may help. They are not presented in any order that suggests priority:

- It should be possible to see where the principles of Every Child Matters are evident and generally influencing what takes place.
- Some activities, particularly local activities, support class work directly and give rationale to classroom activities, such as information gathering.
- For a whole programme to be successful there are specific skills and knowledge that is generally necessary, for example:
  - creating and sustaining motivation and enthusiasm
  - inspiring observation and recording
  - personal and group management outdoors
  - risk assessment
  - reviewing, evaluating, and self assessment.
- Some activities take place offsite because there are no facilities for them on site such as a rock climbing.

These will develop:

- awareness of wider opportunity
  - greater understanding of other environments and people
  - developed team working skills to some extent capable of meeting the additional challenge
  - additional personal management to meet increased responsibilities and less direction and control
  - risk assessment
  - a wider range of health options, lifestyle choices and physical skills.
- There are some benefits that are in support of wider learning objectives and particularly those that are focused on the development of the learner such as those to be encountered through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. These typically include:
    - understanding of personal strengths and opportunities
    - knowledge of team roles and application
    - risk assessment based upon greater remoteness of supervisors
    - Applications of learning without direct supervision development of a personal learning capability
    - decisions actions and consequences, conflict resolution
    - wider and international horizons
    - global issues and citizenship
    - volunteering and community development
    - personal values

- Programmes should be developmental and have sufficient opportunity to deliver an impact over the time available.
- There can be influence that reflects current affairs and opportunities.
- The programme should enshrine the principles of inclusion and provide opportunities for those with special circumstances.
- The opportunity should, to a certain extent, provide the capacity to anticipated so that there is an expectation from both young people and their parents for which they can prepare and plan for the cost.
- The impact of the investment should be measurable and outcomes capable of being monitored and actively pursued.
- There should be a planned review and a team who can undertake this who have the relevant experience.

When considering a proposal for an activity that is at the more demanding end of the overseas range it should be clear where it extends from previous opportunities young people will have had. It should be possible to see that those who will take part, staff and young people, will have the experience, confidence and reasonable likelihood of success.

### **Influencing Change**

The good will of those staff prepared to take groups out and away should be protected, evolution rather than revolution might address the current environment.

Approach change from the top and the bottom at the same time forging links with anyone who will provide support. Major decisions that have a whole school impact can be easier to implement such as whether or not to have a collapsed curriculum event or not. This decision can be taken on the basis of its contribution and what alternatives there are to provide the opportunities in different ways.

Educational Visits Coordinators might work with curriculum leaders to help them decide what they will offer in a coming year so that they can then influence the proposals.

Providing and publishing a statement of intent which could form part of a local learning Outside the Classroom commitment will highlight what is sought and what may be discouraged. See the national learning Out of the Classroom Manifesto at [www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk).

The High Quality in Outdoor Education publication circulated to all Plymouth schools and youth work staff in 2007 contains practical measures that offer a form of assessing whether any trip meets specific quality aspirations.