



MABLETHORPE PRIMARY ACADEMY

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Learning outside the classroom

The government is actively promoting learning outside the classroom and Inspections carried out by Ofsted expect a rich and stimulating outdoor area to be present in schools and expect good use of the school grounds to be made on a daily basis.

Introduction

Excellent teaching gives children the life chances they deserve. Enjoyment is the birth right 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 outdoor learning policy aims to foster children's love of learning. At Mablethorpe Primary Academy, 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.

Therefore, all staff at Mablethorpe Primary Academy have a shared responsibility to provide regular, authentic outdoor learning contexts and to ensure that the environment is used in a stimulating and meaningful way. This includes time spent in class, breaks, lunchtimes and after-school activities. Outdoor spaces are used effectively to promote positive relationships and well-being.

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What do we mean by Outdoor Learning?

Outdoor Learning 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.

Outdoor learning 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. <https://www.outdoor-learning-research.org/Evidence>

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.

Outdoor Learning 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. Outdoor learning also provides experiential

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opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.

Benefits of Outdoor Learning:

Outdoor learning 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.

- Outdoor learning enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon young children's attitudes beliefs and self-perceptions.

Outdoor learning contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem and self-sufficiency.

- Outdoor learning can have a positive impact upon children's behaviour.

- Outdoor learning contributes towards the promotion and children's understanding of the importance of developing a Healthy lifestyle.

- Outdoor learning 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.

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- It 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.
- Can provide important opportunities for the health and well-being of every child.
- improve motivation
- • develop the ability to deal with uncertainty
- • provide challenge and the opportunity to allow for managed "risk taking" to take place
- • reduce behaviour problems and improve attendance
- When children are closely involved in developing and managing their outdoor environment, it helps foster attitudes of stewardship and responsibility and the grounds can become an important asset both for them and the local community. Indeed school grounds offer valuable opportunities for children to be not just stewards of nature, but also students of nature.

It follows that if we want people to live well in this world (Orr, 2004), they need to be educated in this world - in our gardens, green-spaces, local businesses and municipal governments. We are not saying "good bye" to our classrooms; we are opening them up to the world outside!" (Beames, Higgins and Nicol 2012)

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Aims and Objectives of this policy:

- To raise the profile of Outdoor Learning.
- 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

To provide positive opportunities for active learning, we seek to offer outdoor experiences that allow children to:-

- find space to be alone or interact in social groups of differing sizes;
- plan, build, evaluate and sometimes demolish;
- find similarities and differences, observe and classify;
- be energetic, adventurous and assess risk;
- make marks, use large scale media, be messy;

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- plant, grow, harvest and cook;
- hide, explore and discover;
- investigate, make predictions, test theories;
- imagine, pretend and reflect;
- measure, locate, transport and record.

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. Outdoor learning opportunities will be grasped when available and teachers will assess risk. In the first instance the Academy's policies relating to Health and Safety and Risk Assessment should be referred to and applied prior to any outdoor learning activity that may require additional support beyond the reasonable activities one would normally apply within the classroom. It is also important that the Academy applies robust safety measures to effectively manage and minimise risks. Our children are taught to manage risks in regard to outdoor learning. 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 outdoor learning.

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Outdoor Learning 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 always walk on the path at the front of school and be aware that cars may approach through the front gate.
- We must never walk across the car park area.
- We must stay with our group. Our Teachers will send children out in groups of 4.
- We must always ensure that we close all doors behind us. • We must never open the gates to visitors.
- We must be sensible and ensure that we achieve our learning objectives.

Only our teachers are allowed to 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, particularly the Outdoor Provision in the EYFS Policy. It will be reviewed by the Academy Council 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, teachers' self-evaluations, summative assessment

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records and other school procedures we closely monitor the use of outdoor learning as a key element of the learning experience at Mablethorpe Primary Academy. 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 advocate that the pace of learning can be enhanced by using the outdoors and that children who may find the classroom too constraining will perform and behave better outdoors, reducing the time spent on explanation and behaviour management. 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 outdoor learning 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 lucky to have extensive grounds which offer excellent opportunities for both formal and informal learning and play. School buildings can also provide a useful resource for learning about energy use and waste for example - tying in well with the schools Eco school programme and our efforts to have ecology and sustainability as an integrated theme throughout our

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curriculum and evident in all aspects of the life and work of the school, in exactly the same way Health promotion should permeate our school.

The local environment

The locality around school harbours a wealth of opportunities for learners to develop their skills and explore their local environment. In addition, we actively encourage teachers to plan opportunities for children to engage in learning beyond the school grounds such educational visits to the beach to study Coast lines and walks into Mablethorpe as part of our fieldwork studies on Our Local Environment. These also support our work in developing enterprise education and our desire to develop more business links by observing the businesses and occupations within our town. These are planned into all aspects of the curriculum and, by taking learners beyond their familiar environment, stimulate their curiosity and imagination and motivate children in a powerful way.

Managing the delivery of outdoor learning

Equipment & Safety

All play apparatus and equipment is installed subject to the manufacturer's instructions. Risk Assessments are carried out on all large play equipment and play spaces. Play equipment and playground areas are frequently assessed for condition and safety by the school caretaker. Should there be damage to, or concerns surrounding the safety of, any playground equipment, these will either be addressed immediately or the equipment will be taken out of use until the matter is resolved.

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Apparatus is only used by children of the appropriate age, skill, and physical abilities. We may devise a rota to ensure that all children have the opportunity to use play equipment, but that it does not get overcrowded and therefore dangerous. It is understood by all staff that they have the ultimate responsibility of ensuring that the outside play area is safe. Any concerns need to be reported to the Head teacher and the school caretaker.

Some equipment is stored in special areas and is only taken out when it is to be used. It is put away safely when not in use.

Sun Protection -

All children must wear hats during the hot weather. We expect our parents to apply sun cream to their children before coming to school. If necessary, children will be asked to top up an application with sun cream provided by their parents at other stages of the Academy day.

Role of the Adult

The roles should be similar to those indoors. It is made clear to all outdoor staff exactly what their roles are.

Outdoor staff and Out of School staff must ensure that planning for outdoor play is integral with the overall planning for the School and Out of School provision is planned for, this is included in Year group's medium and short term planning.

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Outdoor play staff and Out of School provision staff must ensure that specific staff have been identified to support all activities.

Outdoor play staff and Out of School provision staff must set up equipment and make necessary safety checks.

Outdoor play staff and Out of School provision staff must be aware of "key" children, "focus children" or children with special needs. .

Staff must encourage children to assist in tidying up after using the outdoor facility.

Staff must look out for the many varied opportunities for supporting and encouraging children to explore and extend their experiences.

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. For instance, through staying at outdoor and adventure centres such as PGL at Caythorpe. This provides children with an opportunity to widen their range of experiences and find new skills and interests in which they may excel.

Children with Additional Needs

Outdoor learning can also overlap with the teaching of life skills. At Mablethorpe Primary Academy we support our children by encouraging our pupils to use a range of interdisciplinary skills to meet certain targets and objectives.

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Helping to meet their needs will be enhanced by the development of a multi-functional, multi-faceted room within the school to support learning, to including a range personal skills.

Able Children

Outdoor learning offers opportunities to including personal research and develop a personal understanding of their place in the natural world, further developing an understanding of learning processes, enquiry and thinking skills; and that deepen and enrich subject learning.

The above allow opportunities to access discussion on a moral code, ethics, humanity, sustainability, science in its widest sense, problems pertaining to globalisation and philosophical enquiry, for example. Outdoor Learning acts as a bridge to higher order learning and opportunities to challenge misconceptions and ways of thinking.

Planning and Organisation

There is an expectation that children will have access to outdoor play every day. Wellplanned play, both indoors and outdoors is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. In playing, they behave in different ways: sometimes their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play.

Rotas for playtimes and lunchtime supervision are clearly displayed on the staff room notice board.

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Two members of staff supervise children at play times on both KS1 and KS2 playgrounds.

At lunchtimes children are supervised by Lunchtime assistants: there are 3 Lunchtime assistants allocated to each playground.

Weather conditions should be viewed as an opportunity to develop children's learning.

In the EYFS a shelter covers the outdoor space enabling the children to play and learn in the area at all times, therefore outdoor experiences are not interrupted by weather conditions.

Staff/pupil ratios required for learning experiences in the wider environment -

EYFS Ratios for adult/children on school trips, town gardens, around the school
1:6 KS1

Ratios for adult/children on school trips, town gardens, around the school 1:6

KS2 Ratios for adult/children on school trips, town gardens, around the school.
1:10 The role of staff is crucial:

Planning and resourcing a challenging environment;

- Supporting children's learning through play and planned play activity
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play; and

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- Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play. Our staff are expected to understand and practice the ethos that play, in a secure environment, with effective adult support, children can:
- Explore develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
- Practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
- Be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk or rehearse their feelings
- Take risks and make mistakes
- Think creatively and imaginatively
- Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems
- Express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

ROLE OF THE COORDINATOR

The role of the outdoor learning co-ordinator is to Co-ordinate the outdoor learning areas in the school, in particular developing the outdoor learning area and advise staff for opportunities of outdoor learning throughout the curriculum.

This involves making the area aesthetically pleasing and stimulating for the children with suitable equipment/resources and activities. The co-ordinator will also help and support staff in planning opportunities for outdoor learning to take place and monitor the frequency and effectiveness of this learning.

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Inclusion and Equal Opportunities:

At Mablethorpe Primary Academy we will work hard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination Promote equal opportunities.
- Eliminate disability related harassment Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons.
- Encourage participation by disabled people.

SMSC and British Values:

Spiritual: Explore beliefs and experience; respect values; discover one-self and the surrounding world; use imagination and creativity; reflect.

Moral: Recognise right and wrong; understand consequences; investigate moral and ethical issues; offer reasoned views.

Social: Use social skills in different contexts; work well with others; resolve conflicts; under-stand how communities work

Cultural: Appreciate cultural influences; participate in culture opportunities; understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity.

British Valuyes

At Mablethorpe Primary Academy we uphold and teach pupils about British Values which are defined as:

- democracy
- rule of law

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- individual liberty
- mutual respect
- tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

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