



Percy Main Primary School

Outdoor Learning Policy



Outdoor Learning is an active, experimental approach to learning that involves being outdoors as central part of the experience. It seeks to use the outdoor environment as a vehicle for transforming the experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions. This policy is aimed at developing and embedding outdoor learning for all of the children in our school.

Rational

OFSTED stated that when planned and implemented well 'learning outside the classroom contributes significantly to raising standards and improving pupils emotional and social development' and that 'learning outside the classroom is most successful when it is an integral element of long term curriculum planning and closely linked to classroom activities.'

At Percy Main we believe that our outdoor learning environments have much to offer and value the importance of using the natural environment for the stimulation of learning and promotion of health and well being amongst our children. As a school we are committed to work hard to continue to develop these areas.

Through skilled teaching, interpretation and facilitation we believe outdoor experiences can provide access and freedom to a type of learning that is difficult to replicate indoors, allowing children to respond positively to new experiences, opportunities, challenges, enquiries and responsibilities. At Percy Main we feel it is important to enable children to use the outdoor environment as a context for learning throughout the year.

All children have a right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. Providing positive opportunities for active outdoor learning the outdoor environment can promote and support a framework through which resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness and reciprocity are fostered and one where creativity, curiosity and imagination is encouraged and valued. Therefore we seek to offer outdoor experiences that allow children to become:

Successful Learners

Through improved engagement and stronger motivation to learn children can explore, discover, investigate, predict, test theories, imagine, pretend, reflect, observe and classify.

Confident Individuals

Through developing attitudes, independence, confidence, improved self image and a feeling of well being children can be more energetic and adventurous, access situations and take risks.

Responsible Citizens

Through greater community involvement enhanced by our commitment to the Eco schools Programme children can develop resilience and foster positive attitudes with greater sense of belonging and responsibility towards the environment in which they live.

Effective Contributors

Through greater interaction in the outdoors we seek to develop our children's interpersonal and social skills, group cohesion, collaboration and teamwork.

Aims

The implementation of a curriculum which is interwoven with learning outside the classroom is supported by evidence from the NFER Review (2005) which advocates that outdoor learning offers an ideal framework for acquisition of knowledge and understanding, changes in attitudes and values. In short, learning and achieving.

Our aims are therefore to

- raise the profile of outdoor learning and develop it as an entitlement for all our children*
- seek continued professional enhancement from organisations such as Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC) Learning Through Landscapes (LTL) and Eco Schools to ensure high quality provision of experiences that promote personal development and well being*
- 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*
- encourage closer links with parents in celebrating our developing outdoor areas and sharing the learning that takes place*
- empower children to take ownership of their learning in safe, secure and effective environments in which they can take risks*

Policy into Practice

Possibilities for outdoor learning will be considered across the curriculum, using it as a context and a natural resource for learning. Regular experiences through use of our school grounds will be an area of focus as well as consideration given to the learning experiences outside the classroom on local visits to museums, heritage sites and theatres for example and those that take place further afield (day and residential field study visits).

Health and Safety

At Percy Main Primary School we believe that it is important to ensure 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. We also believe that children should through shared planning be given the opportunities to manage risks for themselves. Outdoor learning opportunities and risk assessments will therefore be assessed by staff and children and will be carried out when appropriate following our school Health and Safety policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of children's learning will be valued equally indoors and outdoors and will form part of the same initial process ensuring equal access and participation for all. Subject leaders will be responsible for monitoring their subject area outdoors.

Policy Date – July 2013

Mrs D Callaghan / Miss K Brownrigg