

Outside Learning for Didsbury C of E Primary

The Eco Committee from Didsbury C of E Primary School spent a rewarding few days in the big outdoors earning the John Muir Award last November. They went to Ghyll Head Outdoor Educational Centre, in Windermere, where the scheme is now being offered as a part of the centre's programme.



The three day course brought Eco Committee members together to discover new ways to care for their environment. Whilst at the centre the group learnt about the world around them, including the importance of the sustainability of our woodlands. They had the exciting opportunity to work with a member of the Forestry Commission, so with loppers and saws in hand, they headed into Grizedale Forest, to cut down trees. They learnt that this was done to encourage the re-growth of trees and plants, as well as the return of animals and habitats native to the Lake District. Another activity undertaken by the group was

to build an "eco circle", using willow. This sculpture now sits in the grounds of Ghyll Head and will be enjoyed by all the visitors to the centre. Although the group only built the skeleton, it is a living willow structure which will be tended by future visiting groups.

One of the main challenges of the award was to share their experiences, which they did through poems, using what they had learnt about things such as biodiversity and conservation. It also taught them to use all of their senses and not just to rely on what they could see. As one pupil said, "I learnt to share my ideas with other people."

John Muir pioneered what is now known as ecology, the idea that the animals, plants and humans are all connected to each other and to their environment. The John Muir Award was launched in 1997, to educate people about their natural environment. It encourages you to enjoy the outdoors, get to know more about nature and wild places and in turn to look after them.

It was clearly a great learning experience for everyone involved: as one member of staff said: "This was an exciting opportunity for the children to experience the outdoor environment, to learn how to create and improve habitats and maintain our planets life support system, from the tiniest ant to the biggest oak tree.

We as a group have learnt a valuable lesson that it is important not to take what we have for granted and have come to realise that we have an important role to play now and in the future."

Editor's notes ESD is partly about learning to live within the limits of the earth's resources. Be it water, food, or fuel, it's often difficult to look at something and understand where it comes from. Learning outside the classroom helps young people to source things. Visiting an organic farm, or planting trees in a wood, are experiences which are fun, challenging, and memorable. This issue has contacts and ideas to help give young people a more memorable childhood.

Thanks to Paula Garbet, Steve Johnson, Clive Belgeonne and all the listed organisations for their contributions.

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Sustainable Schools Year of Action

The DfES have launched the Sustainable Schools Year of Action with a host of initiatives to support and encourage schools that have taken up sustainability issues. The Year runs from September 2006 to September 2007 and began with the 'Government Response to the Consultation on the Sustainable Schools Strategy'.

This document includes the opinions of young people, teachers and those involved in the ESD agenda. Positively it has outlined that "sustainable schools are guided by a commitment to care: care for oneself; care for each other; care for the environment."

Worryingly though, it reveals how young people view adults: "the message received from adults is highly contradictory:" one young person wrote, "Oh yes, we're concerned about global warming and loss of biodiversity... no, we don't recycle, we don't turn off electricity, we still drop litter." So how can adults not appear so hypocritical? Perhaps by working with Sustainable Schools.

Many schools are already working on the agenda, whether it's becoming an Eco School, or writing a School Travel Plan, but it's worth being aware of the new developments which include:

2006-7 Teaching Awards programme for sustainable development; the S3 self evaluation tool for schools recently launched by the DfES, and a range of resources including the Sustainable Schools Assembly Guides.

For more information and the resources go to www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainable-schools or contact MEEN if your school would like INSET. To order the response paper and the DfES National Framework for Sustainable Schools telephone 0845 60 222 60 request ref: 04294-2006BKT-EN and 04231-2006LEF-EN.

Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto

"We believe that every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and development, whatever their age ability or circumstances"

The DfES manifesto for Learning Outside the Classroom recognises the value of experience, of feeling, doing and seeing, and that how and where we learn is as important as what we learn. This experiential approach has been shown to

improve levels of attainment especially with harder to reach young people.

Children are naturally curious, they want to understand the world around them. Learning in the outdoors stimulates learners, encourages them to question and explore, but more importantly we can see that it brings learning to life, encourages creativity and reduces behavioural problems including improvements in attendance. With the need to

equip our young people with the learning and skills to cope with an increasing array of environmental, social and other everyday challenges, learning outside the classroom will prove an essential part of the school curriculum and a teacher's toolkit.

For more details see the manifesto in full :www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/outsideclassroom/

Year of Food and Farming 2007/08

When the Year of Action for Sustainable Schools comes to an end in September 2007 it will transform into the Year of Food and Farming 2007-08.

This offers the opportunity to move from the school grounds to further afield - literally - for the idea is that all primary and secondary pupils should be able to visit the countryside to

experience it first hand. The year also aspires to make sure all primary pupils have undertaken a growing activity and had the opportunity to prepare food, and that all teachers are aware of the curriculum opportunities offered through the experience of food, farming and the countryside.

FACE (Farming and Countryside Education) led this

initiative, with DEFRA and DfES driving it forward, however, the Year will rely on individuals and organisations pledging their support and registering what contributions they can make. If your school or organisation would like to know more about the Year of Food and Farming contact Fiona@face-online.org.uk

Sustainable Cities: Learning outside the classroom

The Learning for Sustainable Cities' project brought together a group of educators from six different countries around the world. The aim of the project was to help young people explore the concept of Sustainable Cities and to identify opportunities for them to be involved in positive change in their city's environment. Much of the work the pupils chose to be involved in took them out of the classroom, into their local environment and into their local communities.

The six cities involved were Manchester (UK), Banjul (the Gambia), Brescia (Italy, Curitiba (Brazil), Halifax (Canada), and Mumbai (India). Educators from each city came together to

identify good practice, produce a common core of teaching practices and develop a training programme for teachers to be able to use their materials. Based on the methodology of Education for Sustainable Development they agreed that the education process was as important as the goal and so utilised methods such as inclusive debate, participatory structures,

and on-going evaluation.

From 2001 to 2003 a great deal of experience, learning and growth occurred and the intent was always to share the journey they underwent with other educators: this can now be done, with the publication of 'What's the Score on Education for Sustainable Development?'

'What's the Score on Education for Sustainable Development?' comes in both Primary and Secondary editions; it is full of ideas, curriculum linked activities and thought provoking exercises. Available from DEP, it is an excellent resource for citizenship learning.



Case studies to inspire:

Manchester

In a Manchester primary school pupils were concerned about the amount of traffic outside the school entrance. They did survey work, questionnaires and interviews with members of the school community and analysed the results in literacy and numeracy lessons. The pupils then discussed what action they could take and in literacy lessons (persuasive writing) they wrote letters to different audiences (parents, the headteacher, local councillors) about the problem, their research and possible solutions. The campaign resulted in the local council putting in traffic-calming measures outside the school.

Brazil

One of the teachers in Curitiba (Brazil) encountered resistance when she proposed taking her pupils to a recycling plant. Colleagues asked what it had to do with teaching English and said it would waste valuable curriculum time. She persisted and the trip went ahead. The recycling plant also had a museum focusing on items people had thrown away. The trip really inspired the pupils and they became involved in waste-reduction campaigns in the school and local community. It has also motivated them to do even better in their English lessons.

India

Plastic bags may be banned in India now because of their indiscriminate use and the fact they blocked drainage, caused flooding and were consequently responsible for a large number of deaths, but one of the schools in the project in Mumbai – aware of these hazards - ran a campaign to request vendors not to provide customers with plastic bags. They were sponsored by a local hotel and had television coverage. The hotel gave cloth bags to the pupils with the slogan 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle'. Since then the pupils have taken their ideas and 'action competence' on to further education: some of them persuaded their college canteen to stop using polystyrene plates and cups when pupils said they were prepared to wash reusable ones themselves.

Outdoor Education: learning outside the classroom

The 'Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto' has a vision that states it: 'is about raising achievement through an organised, powerful approach to learning in which direct experience is of prime importance. This is not only about what we learn but importantly how and where we learn.'



These priorities are also key to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) – it is more about the processes of learning than the acquisition of knowledge. Getting out of the classroom helps put theory into reality. It also provides opportunities to develop a whole range of skills with numerous educational benefits. It can happen at any time and in any place, although the most commonly used situations

are school grounds; the school's local environment; more distant environments in urban or rural settings (museums, theatres, farms etc), and, of course, visits to residential places.

Listed below are a selection of organisations and places that offer opportunities for outdoor education in the school grounds, in Manchester itself, and a little further afield.

Who to invite into school:

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

BTCV can bring volunteers into the school grounds to work on specific projects like habitat creation and wildlife gardens. They will involve pupils and PTAs wherever possible and help schools get funding for the project. The dayrate is £260 which covers insurance, tool and van hire, expertise, etc. For further details contact Katy Lowry on 608 0498

Mersey Basin Trust:

MBT have years of experience helping young people engage with their local environment through studying water courses and issues around water and sustainability. They give help, advice and resources on teaching river studies and learning throughout the curriculum.

They run fieldwork sessions on watercourses in the locality of schools. Contact Val Cooper on 0161 273 4207 or 0794780853 for information/cost.

Red Rose Forest

Red Rose Forest is an environmental regeneration partnership. A key focus for their work is involving people across the Forest area in the creation of a green, vibrant landscape which we can all enjoy. They have free trees for schools, will go into schools to give talks about the work of Red Rose, growing trees from seed and why trees are important. Contact them if you are interested in planting trees in your grounds or would like to plant trees on Red Rose Forest sites. Contact Ellen Hawkins on 0161 872 1660



Where to go in the city:

All Manchester parks have dedicated wardens who will lead on a variety of outdoor activities the area contacts are: North Area, Boggart Hole Clough on 795 2650; Central Area, Platt Fields Park on 224 2902; East Area, Debdale Park on 223 8278; and South Area, Wythenshawe Park – see below for details.

Trafford Ecology Park

Trafford Ecology Park is a local Nature Reserve in the heart of Trafford. Run by Groundwork's education team they offer activities exploring habitats including, a lake, wetland meadow, woodland as well as a bird hide and newt habitat mound. There is a picnic area and excellent indoor facilities including a classroom and IT facilities. Current

programmes focus on pond dipping, habitat studies and environmental art and are all linked to the national curriculum. The key messages from any visit are care for oneself, care for others and care for the environment. All sessions are tailored to the size, age and ability of the visiting group. For further information call Michael Carpenter on 0161 220 1000, or email education@groundwork.org.uk

Mersey Valley Environmental Education Service:

This service is free, with wardens that will provide a dynamic, appropriate and safe learning experience. Sessions are linked to the National Curriculum and include pond dipping, habitat comparisons,

tree planting, visitor management, animal homes, area studies, environmental art, sensory nature walks.

Details: contact Andy Martin on 0161 905 1100 or email a.martin@manchester.gov.uk

Wythenshawe Park:

Offers a variety of educational opportunities in a safe outdoor environment. Their resources include a community farm, an orchard, stables, a cob house (an example of a sustainable building), a series of greenhouses that display four different eco-systems, including a desert and a jungle. There are a dedicated team of wardens who can lead groups of all ages and abilities with direct curriculum links.

Details: contact the wardens on 998 2117.

A little further afield:

Ghyll Head:

Is Manchester City Council's Outdoor Education Centre which offers a range of courses for primary and secondary, youth groups and adults, including the College of the Third Age. It provides outdoor residentials that are curriculum linked and tailor-made to suit each group. (See front page for an example.)

For further information contact the centre on : 015394 43751 or email: admin@ghyllheadoec.co.uk / www.ghyllheadoec.co.uk

Longdendale Environmental Centre:

Offers free educational visits to groups of young people. All days aim to 1) promote an understanding of the importance

of water as a natural resource, 2) promote an understanding of the special qualities of the Peak District National Park, 3) encourage the sustainable management of the environment.

Current programmes are: KS1 – using the senses to explore the environment and consider the needs of living things. KS2 – days linked to water, river, habitats, art and decision-making in the Park. KS3 and 4 – decision making in the Park, moorland management and stream watch days. John Muir Award – which involves exploring wild places, by discovery, experiencing, taking positive action and sharing.

Details: Contact Sarah Wilks on 01457 868127. It is situated off the A628 at Tintwistle near

Glossop and takes about 45 mins from the centre of Manchester.

Stockley Working Farm:

This organic working farm welcomes schools to visit and the day is structured according to KS and special requirements. Generally it consists of lamb feeding, a trailer ride, seasonal talks, a tour of the milking parlour and egg collecting. If you make a request they will discuss why they are organic, the environmental impacts of farming etc. They have teacher packs available for further work in the classroom and it is accredited to the National Association of Farms for Schools.

Details: Stockley Farm, Arley, Northwich, Cheshire. Tel: 101565 777323. For further information they have a very good website : www.stockleyfarm.co.uk

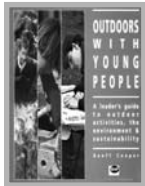


Play Lightly

Horsfall, J (1997) Play Lightly on the Earth, Dawn Publications, USA.

ISBN 1-883220-68-8

Lots of original activities to help teachers, parents and outdoor educators really engage children's imagination. Strong emphasis on creativity and problem solving in the outdoors



Outdoors with Young People

Cooper, G (1998) Outdoors with young people, (a leader's guide to

outdoor activities, the environment & sustainability), Russell House Publishing, Dorset ISBN 1-898924-24-4

Full of practical ideas and activities for introducing young people to environmental issues. Lots of examples including how to work within limitations such as restricted funding.



Nature Detectives

De Boo, M (2005) Nature Detectives, Environmental Science for Primary Children, Association for

Science Education, Hertfordshire ISBN 0-86357-340-1

This book combines formal activities in the classroom with exploration and discovery outdoors. A great resource for science, nature, geography teaching as well as planning, experimenting and straightforward fun in the outdoors



The Adventure Alternative

Mortlock, C (reprinted 2004) The Adventure Alternative, Cicerone Press, Cumbria. ISBN 1-85284-012-9

If you are responsible for the planning of field trips then this

book is the seminal work, providing a background to what makes trips successful, why adventure is important not only for young people but all of us.



Last Child in the Woods

Louv, R (2006) Last Child in the Woods, Saving our Children

from Nature Deficit Disorder, Algonquin Books, USA. ISBN 1-56512-5223-3

If you needed an excuse to get children outdoors this is it! This book shows how engaging with nature helps address the issues of attention disorders, childhood

obesity and depression. If you want to address children's physical and emotional health this book provides the answer.

Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto

Obtain from the DFES via the teachernet website at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/outsideclassroom The Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto sets out a vision to enable every young person to experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of their learning and personal development.

Web resources

Nature Detectives

www.naturedetectives.org.uk

A web based activity programme for young people established by the Woodland Trust and operated in conjunction with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. Also links to the BBC Spring and Autumn Watch series. Contains lots of ideas and downloadable resources for teachers, parents and children

Forest Education Initiative

www.foresteducation.org

FEI aim to increase young people's understanding of the link between trees and the many everyday products, which they provide, and to enable them to appreciate the environmental, social and economic importance of trees, woodlands, forests and wood products. Their website includes a variety of curriculum materials which are subject and age group specific

Field Studies Council

www.field-studies-council.org

Operating 17 centres across the UK the FSC is well known for field trips and teacher education. Their website also includes resources available for download.

John Muir Award

www.johnmuiraward.org

The John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme focused on encouraging people to discover wild places whether in the local area or further a field. It is ideal for those looking at nature, science and geography in the curriculum.

Institute of Outdoor Learning

www.outdoor-learning.org

The IOL is the national governing body for those whose work involves taking people into the outdoors. Their role is to develop high quality, safe and enjoyable outdoor activity provision and to support and enhance the good practice of those who work in the outdoors.

February

Wednesday 21st February 2007

Working with schools and communities on climate and energy

Environmental Trainers Network
£105 + VAT for voluntary
orgs/£160 + VAT for others
London

Tel: 0121 359 2113 or

email: ETN@btcv.org.uk

This popular event will explore approaches to teaching and learning about these issues and how schools might work with the community, voluntary

sector, local authorities and business to meet the challenges and responsibilities of climate change and its impact.

This session will be of interest to teachers, local authority and voluntary sector officers working with schools or the community.

Tuesday 27th February 2007

Working with schools on Citizenship Education

Environmental Trainers Network
£105 + VAT for voluntary
orgs/£160 + VAT for others
London

Tel: 0121 359 2113 or email:

ETN@btcv.org.uk

Secondary and primary schools are required to develop Citizenship as part of their curriculum: this event will explore how voluntary organisations, local authorities and others can work in partnership with schools to provide understanding and skills in active citizenship.

This session will be of interest to teachers and local authority officers, community and environmental workers who work with schools.

March

Thursday 1st March 2007

Manchester ESD Forum

For details call MEEN :

0161 273 8881 for details.

This forum has been set up for organisations who work with schools around Education for Sustainable Development in Manchester. It's aims are to network, share good practice and to keep up to date with the national, regional and local context which informs the work of the group. All are welcome, whether from the voluntary sector, local authority, or other area of interest.

Friday 2nd March 2007

Share Fayre

Coordinated by the NW Education for Sustainable Development Forum. Held at the Gujarat Hindu Society, Preston

This free event will showcase organisations from the North West working on the different areas of ESD as they are linked to the 8 doorways of the Sustainable Schools strategy. If you want to see what is happening in your region and share information and inspiration with other organisations and schools, this is an event not to be missed.

For further details contact Angie Jukes on 01942 776725 or email angie.jukes@nwra.gov.uk

Thursday 15th March 2007

How to set up, sustain and enjoy a Gardening Club

Beaver Road Primary School,
Didsbury

Organised by MEEN : 0161 273 8881 for details and booking.

This free afternoon session will give you ideas for setting up a gardening club, provide information on what to do when, provide ideas for winter activities, and give you the opportunity to get your hands dirty! Beaver Road Primary Gardening Club is hosting the session and will be talking about their experiences, successes and problems. Lots of time for sharing and questions.

Thursday 15th March 2007

Working with schools on Sustainable Development Education

Environmental Trainers Network
£105 + VAT for voluntary
orgs/£160 + VAT for others
Bristol

Tel: 0121 359 2113 or email:

ETN@btcv.org.uk

This popular session will explore practical examples of organisations working in partnership with schools and young people to develop an understanding of sustainable

development. It introduces a range of approaches and frameworks, including planning, evaluation, the National Curriculum, and resources. This session will be of interest to teachers and local authority officers, community and environmental workers who work with schools.

Tuesday 27th March 2007

Education outside the classroom

Environmental Trainers Network
£105 + VAT for voluntary
orgs/£160 + VAT for others
Birmingham

Tel: 0121 359 2113 or email:

ETN@btcv.org.uk

Linking to the 'Education outside the classroom manifesto' this event will explore the scope, benefits and barriers of education outside the classroom. Also, it will examine the opportunities for partnerships between schools, youth groups and other providers, and links with other initiatives such as Extended Schools, Every Child Matters, Youth Matters and Sustainable Schools.

This session will be of interest to teachers, youth workers, community and environmental workers who encourage out of the classroom learning.

What is Manchester Environmental Education Network?

Manchester Environmental Education Network (MEEN) is a membership-based organisation aiming "To inspire and motivate learning about sustainability by building a network of people actively committed to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Manchester." The network was established by six partner organisations involved in the project, and currently employs a network coordinator and a Sustainable Schools Project coordinator.

Membership of the network offers:

- * free network directory (pay only for P&P) - while stocks last
- * free termly newsletter
- * support from network coordinator
- * reduced entrance to MEEN events
- * a voice in how MEEN is run and the activities of the network

Project Partners:

Development Education Project (DEP),

Laurel Cottage
c/o MMU 799 Wilmslow Road
Manchester M20 2RR
Tel: 0161 921 8020

Groundwork Manchester, Salford and Trafford,

Timber Wharf,
42-50 Worsley Street
Castlefield
M15 4LD
Tel: 0161 220 1000

Manchester Environmental Resource Centre initiative (MERCi),

Bridge-5 Mill,
22a Beswick Street, Ancoats,
Manchester. M4 7HR
Tel: 0161 273 1736

Manchester Healthy Schools

Partnership,
Mauldeth House,
Mauldeth Road West, Chorlton.
Manchester. M21 7RL
Tel: 0161 882 2313

Environmental Campaigns

Manchester City Council

3rd Floor,
Pink Bank Lane,
Belle Vue,
Manchester
M12 5QN
Tel: 0161 953 2760

Mersey Basin Trust,

Bridge-5 Mill, 22a Beswick Street,
Ancoats, Manchester. M4 7HR
Tel: 0161 273 4207
merseybasintrust@hotmail.com
www..merseybasintrust.org.uk

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Membership of Manchester Environmental Education Network (MEEN)

Please fill in this form and return to the network coordinator at the above address, enclosing a cheque for the relevant amount.

Name School / Organisation Subject (where applicable)

Address

Tel Fax E-mail

Schools / Organisations - Manchester	£8
Individuals - Manchester (waged / unwaged)	£5 / £2
Non-Manchester based membership	£12
Please add P&P for directory	£2

TOTAL

I enclose a cheque payable to 'MEEN' for £_____