



Marazion School Learning Outside the Classroom Policy

Reviewed May 2024 by Headteacher; Assistant Headteacher; Link Governors for safeguarding/ SEND

Approved May 2024 by Full Governing Board

‘In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.’
John Muir

‘The best classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky.’
Margaret McMillan

At Marazion School we believe that all children have the right to experience the world around them and ‘live, laugh and learn’ in the natural environment. We are passionate in using the outdoors to make learning come alive and to nurture our children’s personal and social development.

What is Learning Outside the Classroom?

Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) can be defined as: *‘The use of places other than the classroom for teaching and learning.’*

Learning outside the classroom is a broad term that includes: outdoor play, learning in areas outside the classroom, including other places in school buildings, school grounds, environmental education, personal and social development, outdoor lessons, and visits to other places. LOtC can provide a dramatic contrast to the indoor classroom. Direct experience in other locations are often more motivating and have more impact and credibility, which leads to an enrichment of children’s cultural capital. The results from LOtC can be instantaneous due to its active nature, which takes a multisensory approach to children’s development. Through skilled teaching, interpretation or facilitation, LOtC experiences become a stimulating source of fascination and personal growth. Active learning readily develops the learning skills of enquiry, experiment, feedback, reflection, review, communication, problem solving, a ‘can do’ attitude and cooperation with others. LOtC engages and inspires children, leading to a positive impact on behavior. LOtC can help to bring many school subjects alive as they focus on real results

and consequences. LOtC also provides experiential opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to challenges and responsibilities, as well as managing risk and coping with change.

Aims

LOtC offers opportunities to:

- Provide outdoor learning activities for all ages.
- Make learning fun and memorable.
- Develop learning skills of enquiry, experiment, feedback, reflection, review, communication, problem solving, to become independent and cooperative learners.
- To empower children to take ownership and have direction of their learning
- Develop an awareness of the local environment and become guardians for their school environment and the wider environment around them.
- To provide a challenging, safe and secure environment within which children can take and manage risks.
- Deepen experiences which then enrich skills and knowledge across the whole curriculum.
- Enrich children's cultural capital.
- Experience awe and wonder of the world.
- The only comment I have is adding in Beach Cleans & Learning days where child go off site like to make pottery with Vanessa or the gallery for example.

Why should we do it?

Personal Development

- There are a number of benefits associated with regular physical exercise (which regular LOtC sessions can provide) including; improved patience, energy, optimism, self-confidence, self-assurance, body image and emotional stability.
- Direct experience of the natural environment has significant mental and physical health benefits, enhances self-esteem and self-efficacy, and also provides opportunities for spiritual development.

Social Development

- Evidence indicates that LOtC experiences enhance interpersonal relationships and improve socialisation, and also facilitates group bonding and co-operation.
- Relationships change, children are more ready to learn and have a better developed sense of self-worth.

There is strong evidence that good quality learning outside the classroom adds much value to classroom learning. It can lead to a deeper understanding of the concepts that span traditional subject boundaries and those that are frequently difficult to teach effectively using classroom methods alone. Quality learning experiences in 'real' situations have the capacity to raise achievement across a range of subjects and to develop better personal and social skills.

When these experiences are well planned, safely managed and personalised to meet the needs of every child they:

- Improve academic achievement.
- Provide a bridge to higher order learning.
- Develop skills and independence in a widening range of environments.
- Make learning more engaging and relevant to young people.
- Develop active citizens and stewards of the environment.
- Nurture creativity.
- Provide opportunities for informal learning through play.
- Reduce behaviour problems and improve attendance.
- Stimulate, inspire and improve motivation.
- Develop the ability to deal with uncertainty.
- Provide challenge and the opportunity to take acceptable levels of risk.

Risk Management

One of the many benefits of LOtC is that participants learn how to manage risk appropriately and effectively. The school has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed, requiring them to be reduced to an 'acceptable' or 'tolerable' level. Risk management should be informed by the benefits to be gained from participating and the starting point for any risk assessment should take in to consideration the intended benefits and learning outcomes. Any residual risk (the risk remaining after control measures have been put in to place) should be of an 'acceptable' level.

Members of staff should be clear that ongoing (dynamic) evaluation of risks should still be carried out during all sessions to account for possible changing conditions or unexpected situations.

The lead member of staff is responsible for completing the risk assessments for their activity/visit and this information should be shared with all other members of staff.

Where does Learning Outside the Classroom take place?

The School Grounds

Our outdoor areas are constantly developing and being enhanced to offer excellent opportunities for both formal and informal learning and play. Within the school grounds, our children have access to, for example:

- A large playground
- A mud kitchen
- An undercover barn area
- Two climbing walls
- Monkey climbing bars
- Treehouse
- Swings
- An outdoor classroom with its own kitchen garden and different spaces for flowers and vegetables
- A woodland area
- Large and small outdoor tables
- A Roundhouse outdoor classroom
- A Fairy House

- A large playing field
- A construction area
- A fire pit (for use with under adult supervision)
- A range of outdoor role play areas
- Sensory herb garden
- Sensory Trail designed by a child at Marazion School
- Tyres for construction
- Storytelling space
- Reflective spaces for children to relax
- Outdoor seating area on the field.

The Local Environment

The locality around school is an area of outstanding beauty, which offers a wealth of opportunities where learners can develop their skills and knowledge within their local environment and to enrich all areas of the curriculum. For example; Marazion Marshes, beaches and coastlines, National Trust sites, sites of special scientific interest, heritage sites, places of worship, theatres and involvement through citizenship activities like local volunteering projects.

Residential Visits

Staying away from home is a powerful way of developing key life skills, building confidence, self-esteem, communication and team work. Our school has a strong commitment to the value of learning beyond the school day and a variety of residential visits are provided; each giving rich experiences to our children. The residential programme is as follows:

Reception/Year 1/Year 2 – An extended day of activities in the summer term, often linking to the current learning topic. Year 2 children are given the option of staying overnight at school, under full staff supervision.

Year 3 – 2 day/1 night or 3 day/2 night residential visit based on adventure activities such as rock climbing, high ropes, surfing and kayaking.

Year 4/Year 5 – This residential visit is on a rolling programme and can be:

- 3 day/2 night residential in a local town/city
- 5 day/4 night residential in the Isles of Scilly, including travel by ferry and on an aeroplane.

Year 6 – Four day/three night residential to London, including train and tube travel and visiting famous London landmarks, for example, the London Eye and the Houses of Parliament. Residential Visit to Oxford is also an optional residential visit offered to Year 6 children as part of their 'Bright Futures Start Here' topic.

Adventure Days

During autumn term every class takes part in a day of activities, which is extended past the usual school day and ends with the class team having dinner together. This allows children and staff to work together outside of the classroom, in a more informal environment, building on social interaction and team work. It is an opportunity for staff to note the full potential of each child right at the start of the school year. This information can then be linked to the planning and activities that take place back in school, both in and out of the classroom.

Funky/Forest Fridays

Funky Forest Friday (FFFs) sessions promote Resilience, Independence and Creativity. Pupils learn in two mixed age groups; EYFS/KS1 and all of KS2 to develop positive relationships between each other and the natural world, showing love, tolerance and respect. Children have opportunities for open-ended enrichment and learn creatively in mixed age groups. They direct their own learning in the natural environment to develop positive relationships, independence, confidence and to improve mental and physical health and wellbeing. Whilst learning outdoors, they are provided with opportunities to take on challenges to develop skills progressively and be risk-takers.

Outdoor Learning

Since the introduction of our immersive curriculum using termly topics, key stage 1 and 2 pupils have been able to use the outdoors as a means to deliver high quality, relevant learning, including working with visitors, for example a local potter, artist or musician. Links are made to the current topic, with the outdoor environment also being used to support delivery in reading, writing and maths. Learning outside the classroom also covers a key aspect of the national curriculum, which states that pupils should be taught to; 'take part in outdoor and adventurous activity challenges both individually and within a team.' As part of our Outdoor learning provision, pupils also have the opportunity to take part in Beach School sessions – beach cleans and learning days, where child-centred experiences happen alongside activities to develop knowledge and the care of the shore and our oceans.

Community Links

Marazion School work closely with the following organisations:

- Surfers Against Sewage
- National Trust
- St Aubyn Estate (including St Michael's Mount)
- Global Boarders Surf School
- Penzance Gymnastic Club
- Beare's Den Campsite
- Marazion Town Council
- Penwith Education Trust
- Penwith PE Group
- Marazion Sailing Club.

Inclusion

Marazion School seeks to ensure that outdoor learning and visits are accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender, religion or ability to pay. Every reasonable effort is made to find venues and activities that are both suitable and accessible and that enable the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved. An individual risk assessment must be completed for any pupil with additional needs taking part in any LOtC. This must be discussed with, and signed by, the pupil's parent/carer prior to the activity taking place.

'Look deep into nature and you will understand everything better.'

Albert Einstein