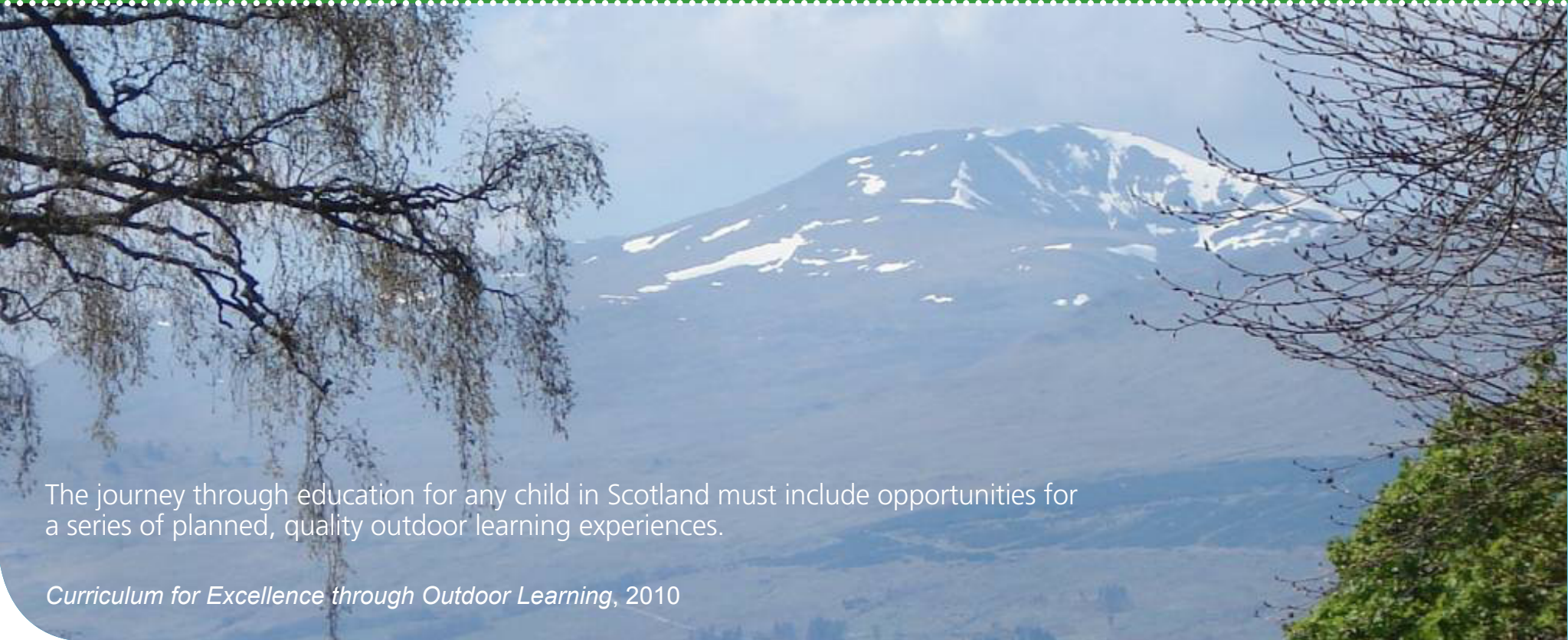


Outdoor Learning 3–18

Self-evaluation Resource



The journey through education for any child in Scotland must include opportunities for a series of planned, quality outdoor learning experiences.

Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning, 2010

www.LTScotland.org.uk

Learning and Teaching Scotland



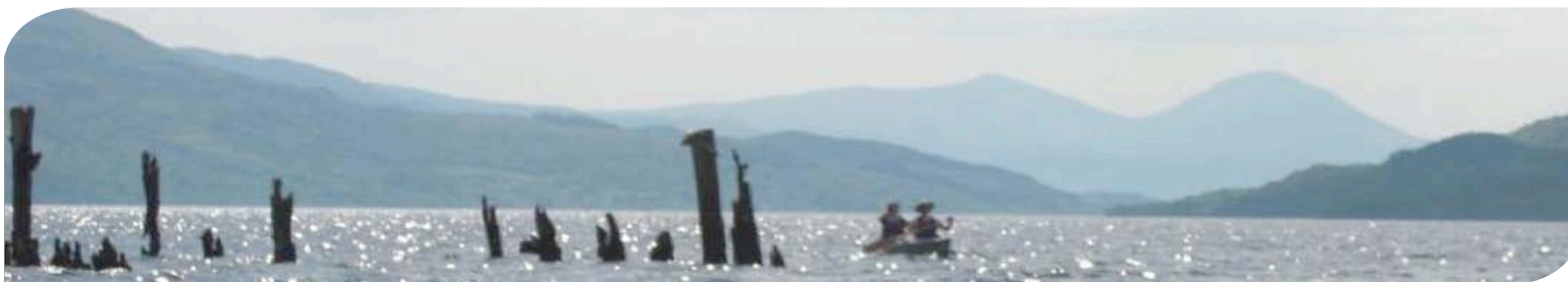
Foreword

The outdoor learning self-evaluation resource is part of *Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning*, developed by the Outdoor Learning Strategic Advisory Group (2008–2010) and produced by Learning and Teaching Scotland. The resource is specifically designed to support teachers and educators in pre-school centres and primary, special and secondary schools and Community Learning and Development (CLD) to evaluate the potential of their work to help children and young people learn outdoors. Staff in other sectors who are involved in the delivery of outdoor learning for children and young people will also benefit from using this resource.

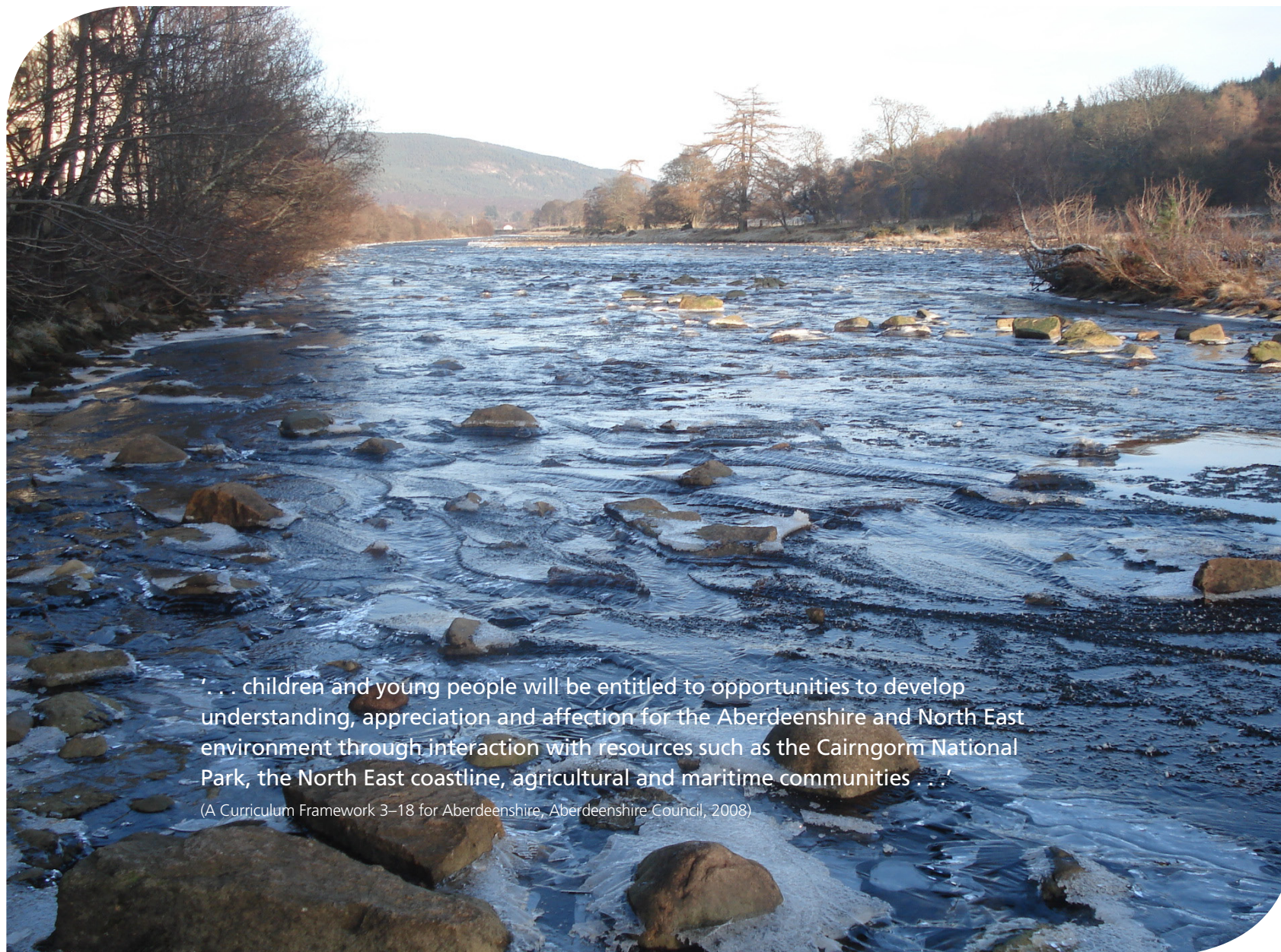
Outdoor learning can include, amongst other activities, cultural visits, science and geography fieldwork, environmental and countryside education, outdoor and adventurous group activities, learning through outdoor play, and visits to museums and heritage sites. It offers challenge, enjoyment, coherence and relevance, and remains essential to children and young people's health development and wellbeing. Learning outdoors provides children and young people with rich and varied opportunities for resourcefulness, inventiveness and imagination. It is therefore vital that establishments maximise children's opportunities to learn out of doors.

Effective evaluation enables establishments to identify the strengths of their curriculum and the changes needed to achieve better outcomes for learners. It helps us to find out what works and what doesn't and to absorb new knowledge in the process. For self-evaluation to give an accurate, rounded view, it must triangulate evidence from people's views, direct observation of learning and teaching and sources of information and data.

The self-evaluation resource is based upon, and follows the design structure of *How Good Is Our School 3* (HGIOS3). Reference to HGIOS3 will help explain the principles of self-evaluation using quality indicators. The indicators used are: key performance outcomes (1), impact on learners (2) and delivery of education (5). Note the numbering of the key indicators in the outdoor learning self-evaluation resource maintains the numbering of the key indicators used in HGIOS3.



Loch Tay, Perthshire



'... children and young people will be entitled to opportunities to develop understanding, appreciation and affection for the Aberdeenshire and North East environment through interaction with resources such as the Cairngorm National Park, the North East coastline, agricultural and maritime communities ...'

(A Curriculum Framework 3–18 for Aberdeenshire, Aberdeenshire Council, 2008)

River Dee, Aberdeenshire



Outdoor Learning

Why?

- It provides a real-world context for all learning.
- It encourages knowledge, wonder of and concern for the natural environment.
- It offers opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement.
- It impacts positively on children and young people's attitudes, beliefs and self-perceptions.
- It enables increasing independence, self-sufficiency and confidence, including considerations of risk and consequence.
- It provides opportunities for relaxation and reflection.
- It complements indoor learning and is equally important.
- It embraces different approaches to learning and teaching.

What?

- Many experiences and outcomes can be delivered outdoors, allowing children and young people opportunities to apply new skills and knowledge across a range of learning contexts.



Minibeast Hunt

How?

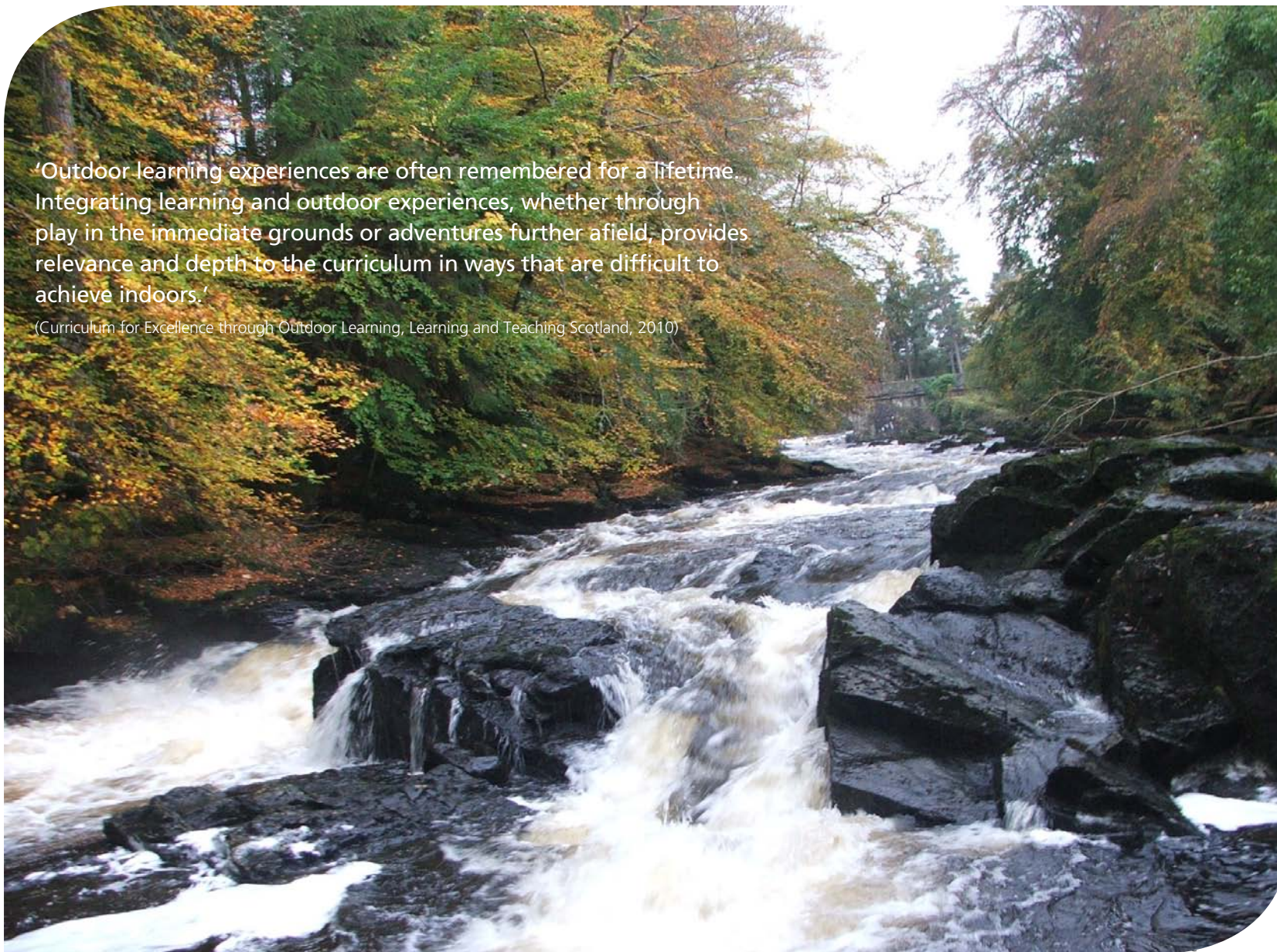
- By exploring relationships and connections within the natural and built environment surrounding the school setting.
- By using the local authority area and the wider Scottish environment.
- By enabling children and young people to lead planning and learning.
- By using knowledge of local and national resources.
- By working in partnership with other outdoor agencies.
- By enabling creative and active approaches to learning.



Den Building

'Outdoor learning experiences are often remembered for a lifetime. Integrating learning and outdoor experiences, whether through play in the immediate grounds or adventures further afield, provides relevance and depth to the curriculum in ways that are difficult to achieve indoors.'

(Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning, Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2010)



Outdoor Learning

Key performance outcomes

Improvements in performance

1.1

Key questions

- What evidence is there to show that outdoor learning experiences have enabled standards of attainment to be raised and/or maintained consistently for learners?
- How effectively does outdoor learning contribute to raising the attainment of those children and young people who are at risk of missing out?
- How successfully do outdoor learning activities enable learners to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community?
- To what extent do outdoor learning experiences enable children and young people to achieve in a range of activities including, where appropriate, work and residential experiences?
- To what extent have outdoor learning experiences been prioritised in the school's improvement plan in order to ensure a measurable impact on improving the achievements, attainment and wellbeing of all learners?

Key features

This indicator related to the achievements of the school. It relates to the overall performance and improvement of learners' progress in becoming successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. It also relates to how successfully the school has taken forward its vision. The application of this quality indicator should take account of the nature of the school, its pupil population and its context.

Themes

Standards of attainment over time

Overall quality of learners' achievement

Impact of the school's improvement plan

Outdoor Learning

Key performance outcomes

Improvements in performance

1.1

Examples of good practice

- Constructing a plastic bottle greenhouse to enable seeds to be sown for the school garden. All children and young people included. Working as part of a team to solve problems. Promoting transfer of skills to other areas of learning.
- Building a house in the forest. This experience was used at a later date to motivate children and young people to write creatively.
- Walking through woodland. Increased sensory awareness.



Plastic Bottle Greenhouse



Building a Fairy's House



Walking

Sources of evidence

- Attainment data including SQA data
- Discussions with children and young people on Pupil Council and other consultative groups within school
- Photographs to evidence individual, class, team and whole establishment achievements
- Whole staff consultation on establishment improvement plan
- Observation of learning experiences – photograph; video
- Interviews with different groups of learners – audio file
- Youth Achievement Awards data

Outdoor Learning

Key performance outcomes

Improvements in performance

1.1

Own practice

Taking learning forward to support improvement



'Going outdoors can also be a voyage of discoveries where people find things out about themselves, about each other and about the natural world.'

(The Russell House Outdoor Education Companion – R Greenway, 2004)

Glen Kinglass, Argyll and Bute

Outdoor Learning

Impact on learners

Learners' experiences

2.1

Key questions

- To what extent are children and young people actively involved in planning their outdoor learning experiences?
- How effective are the opportunities in enabling children and young people to investigate practical problems and find solutions for themselves?
- How effective are our strategies in enabling children and young people to initiate and develop ideas for themselves and to collaborate with others?
- To what extent do we provide consistent, high-quality feedback on learning outdoors, to children and young people, in order to raise their awareness of themselves as learners?
- How successfully do we utilise the outdoor environment in order to enable children and young people to actively contribute to the life of the establishment and the wider community?

Key features

This indicator relates to the quality of learners' experiences. Learners are aware of their strengths and needs as learners and are satisfied that their views are taken into account.

Themes

The extent to which learners are motivated and actively involved in their own learning and development.

Outdoor Learning

Impact on learners

Learners' experiences

2.1

Examples of good practice

- Working together to create a den in the forest, constructing a place to shelter. This experience formed the basis of an imaginative writing lesson, drama, music and talking.



Den Building

- Working collaboratively in the establishment grounds. Light experiment using solar power. Problem solving and co-operating together.



Detecting Light

- Field trip to Cairngorms National Park. Enhancing knowledge of the natural world. Understanding of the need for sustainable relationships between people and their environment.



Appreciating

Sources of evidence

- Observation of learning and teaching – photograph; video
- Depth of learners' engagement in activities and tasks – video; photograph; audio file
- Discussion with learners on the quality of their learning experiences
- Observation of children and young people engaged in activities
- Learner and stakeholder questionnaires – analysis of responses

Outdoor Learning

Impact on learners

Learners' experiences

2.1

Own practice

Taking learning forward to support improvement

'Taken together, indoor and outdoor experiences delivering outcomes across the evolving curriculum will meet national aspirations for every young person: the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes they will develop to embrace the challenges of their future.'

(Taking Learning Outdoors – Partnerships for Excellence: Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2007)



Kirkwall Marina, Orkney

Outdoor Learning

Delivery of education

The curriculum

5.1

Key questions

- To what extent do outdoor learning principles, activities and philosophies reflect local and national advice in order to meet the needs of all children and young people?
- How successfully do we involve all staff in developing the outdoor learning curriculum and to what extent do developments take account of the views of parents and learners?
- How well, as a staff, do we reflect on the range and quality of outdoor learning experiences we offer to learners and also on the impact these experiences have on children and young people?
- To what extent do outdoor experiences meet the needs of all learners, giving opportunities for choice and, where appropriate, specialisation?
- To what extent are outdoor learning experiences stimulating, challenging, relevant and enjoyable for all learners?
- How well does outdoor learning support progression within curriculum areas, promote achievement and enable children and young people to grow as citizens?
- To what extent do the outdoor learning experiences we offer provide continuity and progression for learners at points of transition?

Key features

This indicator relates to the ways that curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary studies, the life of the establishment as a community, and opportunities for personal achievement develop pupils' capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. It focuses on the quality of the curriculum across stages and transition points. It highlights the need for the curriculum to be dynamic to take account of innovation, and flexible to meet the needs of all learners.

Themes

The rationale and design of the curriculum

The development of the curriculum

Programmes and course

Transitions

Outdoor Learning

Delivery of education

The curriculum

5.1

Examples of good practice

- Environmental issues – recycling. Learners given a real experience of what happens to rubbish after it has been collected from their houses. Sustainability in a real-life situation. Report writing about own locality. Recycling in the school.



Recycling

- Outdoor learning in a coastal location. Encompassing visual, auditory and kinaesthetic approaches to learning. Experiences used in personal and creative writing.



Rock Pooling

- Creating a Journey stick. Recording details of a journey through the forest by tying appropriate material found on the forest floor onto a branch. Colours chosen to represent areas of the forest visited. Journey stick used in class to assist with reporting back on journey.



Journey Stick

Sources of evidence

- Observation of learning and teaching – photograph, video
- Sampling with individual learners and within groups of learners – assessment of the level of challenge within tasks and activities
- Discussion with learners – audio file
- Lesson planning
- Whole establishment improvement planning
- Reflection on learning and teaching – matching learning opportunities to learner needs
- Transition arrangements to and from establishments.

Outdoor Learning

Delivery of education

The curriculum

5.1 Own practice

Taking learning forward to support improvement

'A learning environment is a living, changing system . . . it conditions how we feel, think and behave; and it affects the quality of our lives.'

(Greenman, 1988)



River Etive, Perthshire

Outdoor Learning

Delivery of education

Meeting learning needs

5.3

Key questions

- How well do outdoor learning activities match the needs of individual learners?
- How effectively do outdoor experiences and resources provide appropriate support and challenge to enable all learners to maximise their progress?
- In our planning, how effectively have we ensured that outdoor experiences offer an appropriate pace of learning to all children and young people?
- How well does our planning of outdoor experiences reflect the need to review and evaluate the needs of individual learners, following consultation with the learners, their parents and partner services?
- How successfully do support staff and partner agencies make a contribution when planning outdoor learning experiences to ensure all learning needs are met?

Key features

This indicator relates to the establishment's arrangements for meeting the needs of all learners, including potentially vulnerable groups, and addressing barriers to learning. This includes identifying the needs of, and providing support and challenge for, groups and individuals who may have additional support needs arising from, for example, the learning environment, family circumstances, disability or health needs; or social and emotional factors.

Themes

- Tasks, activities and resources
- Identification of learning needs
- The roles of teachers and specialist staff
- Meeting and implementing the requirements of legislation

Outdoor Learning

Delivery of education

Meeting learning needs

5.3

Examples of good practice

- Awareness of minibeast habitats. Appreciation of the fact that part of the process of protecting habitats in Scotland involves studying plant and animal life. Survey of biodiversity (habitats and species) in establishment grounds.
- Use of establishment grounds for large construction tasks.
- Working together in establishment or community garden. Opportunities for all children and young people to be involved. Reporting back to establishment on progress and also informing local community.



Minibeast Hunt



Constructing



School Garden

Sources of evidence

- Observation and reflection on learning and teaching – photographs; video
- Discussions with learners – audio file; video
- Examples of learners' work
- Assessment is for Learning strategies used to identify the needs of all learners
- Discussions with support staff
- Interviews with learners, parents/carers and other partner agencies as and when appropriate
- Transition arrangements

Outdoor Learning

Delivery of education

Meeting learning needs

5.3

Own practice

Taking learning forward to support improvement



‘Learning outdoors can be the educational context which encourages children and young people to make connections experientially, leading to deeper understanding within and between curriculum areas and meeting learner needs.’

(Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning, Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2010)

Outdoor Learning

Delivery of education

Improvement through self-evaluation

5.9

Key questions

- How effectively do we, along with partner agencies, evaluate the quality of the outdoor learning experiences we offer to children and young people?
- How well do we, as an establishment, work in active partnership with parents, learners, partners and others, to improve the outdoor learning experiences offered to children and young people?
- How successfully have we involved all partners in agreeing the criteria for measuring key aspects of learners' successes and achievements?
- How well do we evaluate new outdoor learning initiatives, and how effective are we at sharing good practice within the establishment?
- How effectively do we use the information gained from our self-evaluation to plan for improvement in outdoor learning experiences?

Key features

This indicator relates to the establishment's arrangements for improvement through self-evaluation and its commitment to this. It highlights the importance of gathering and responding to the views of all partners and stakeholders and involving them. It focuses on the extent to which an establishment knows itself well and improves the successes and achievements of learners.

Themes

Commitment to self-evaluation

Management of self-evaluation

Continuous improvement

Outdoor Learning

Delivery of education

5.9

Examples of good practice

- Young people reflecting on and evaluating their work with each other, supported by a staff member in order to plan their next steps and take their learning forward.
- Pupils reflecting on their outdoor learning experiences through a discussion forum on Glow. Engaging with each other and sharing their thoughts.
- Whole staff reflections on outdoor learning experiences, showing a commitment to self-evaluation of key aspects of learners' successes and achievements.



Shared self-evaluation



Self-evaluation through Glow



Learning Communities

Improvement through self-evaluation

Sources of evidence

- Improvement planning shared with all staff
- Quality improvement calendar
- Observation of learning and teaching – photographs; video
- Learners' achievements
- Discussion with staff, pupils and other stakeholders
- Analysis of stakeholder questionnaires
- Analysis of records of progress, achievement and attainment

Outdoor Learning

Delivery of education

Improvement through self-evaluation

5.9

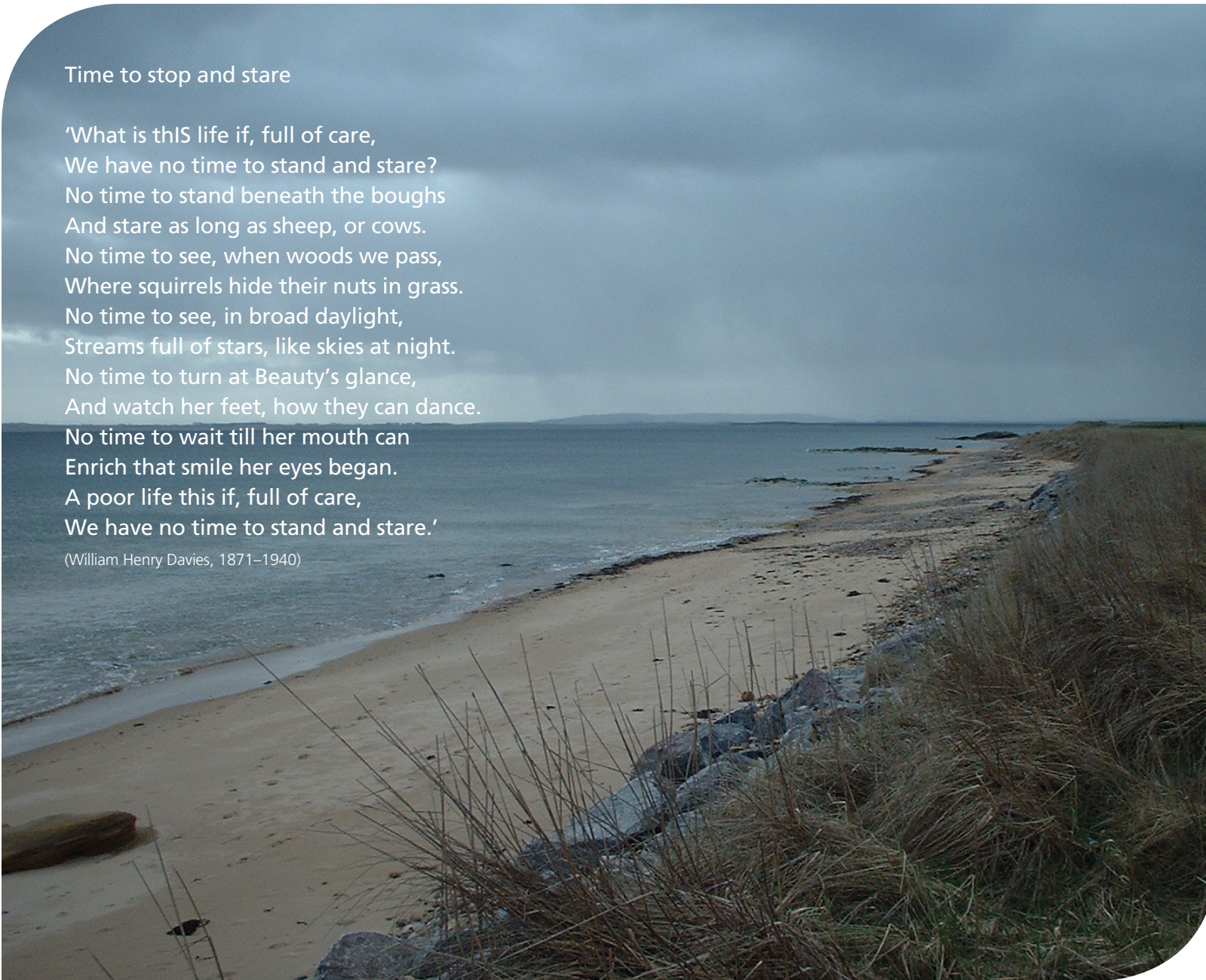
Own practice

Taking learning forward to support improvement

Time to stop and stare

'What is thIS life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?
No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep, or cows.
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.
No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.
A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.'

(William Henry Davies, 1871–1940)



Dornoch Beach, Sutherland