

Education and Culture Committee

Outdoor Learning

Submission from Beeslack Community High School

Outdoor Learning

School background

Beeslack Community High School is a non-denominational school, which serves the communities of North Penicuik, Roslin, Bilston and Auchendinny. A significant number of young people attend Beeslack as a result of placing requests. We are blessed that the school sits in 17 acres of land, which includes woodland, and we have easy access to a pond, streams and a river. Furthermore, we are in close proximity to the Pentland Hills. We also benefit from being able to tap into Midlothian's very effective outdoor learning team and members of staff with a keen interest in promoting outdoor learning.

Outdoor Learning at Beeslack Community High School.

General	Due to the school grounds, we are well placed to make use of them across a range of subjects. Biology/science/social studies classes fairly regularly make use of our outside space.
S1	John Muir Award (see paper). This session all S1 are working towards a John Muir Award as part of their weekly curriculum through the study of art, music, CDT and ICT as part of a rota.
S1 and S2	A group of 8-10 pupils from each year are selected to take part in three days of activities as a reward for working to the very best of their ability.
S2	Forest 'Skills' – part of the elective programme in the junior school. Pupils will probably also achieve a John Muir Award Explorer Award.
S2 into S3	Outward Bounds Trust and Midlothian Outdoor Education have provided a programme as part of a Transitions Group for vulnerable youngsters, those at risk of missing out. This is a 4 day programme and parents are encouraged to attend on one of the days to bolster relationships between the parents and school, and parent and child.
S1 to S3	Orienteering programme in PE.

S2 and Advanced Higher Geography students	Benmore Trip for a week in January – Social Studies and Outdoor Activities.
Duke of Edinburgh Award	Bronze Award for S3 and S4 pupils.
S1 to S6 Students Cycling	<p>We have Cycling Friendly Status. A number of staff and pupils have been trained to lead groups. There are three groups that operate after school from March to September and a group runs throughout the year as part of the senior electives programme. Furthermore, community groups have hired the cycles.</p> <p>We are currently awaiting results of a bid to create a mountain bike skills trail within the school grounds.</p>
S6 weekend Field Trips for Advanced Higher geography students	Combination of field work and outdoor activities.
Foreign Excursions	There is a tradition of running trips for pupils that have an Outdoor Activity focus. For example, we are in the process of organising our third trip to Malawi where students have been involved in a building project for a rural community and also participate in a walk to the summit of Mount Mulanje. There have been regular trips to Norway (Glacier walking and white water rafting), French Alps (walking and climbing) and Southern France (watersports).
S5 Induction Programme	Armed services come into school to deliver problem solving activities to the year group to encourage team building.
S6 Induction Programme	All of S6 attend a one day programme of activities to foster team building. This involves students taking part in canoeing, kayaking and problem solving activities.
Ski Racing Team	The school has been very successful in winning local skiing competitions and competing at a national level also.
Link with a local farm	We have established a very good link with a local farm whose owner wants to help pupils who are really struggling with school/are vulnerable/have behavioural problems. It has been a very successful experience for the pupils who have been involved.
MOD and Outward Bound Project	Last year we were involved in working with

	<p>the MOD on a project using the Outward Bound Trust to help pupils with family members deployed to Afghanistan.</p>
<p>The Whitmuir Biochar Project</p>	<p>The project creates biochar using local woody waste in a purpose built kiln. Biochar is a form of charcoal used in horticulture and agriculture. It is said that biochar can improve soil fertility and crop productivity as well as contributing to climate change mitigation by reducing and sequestering carbon. Whitmuir are testing the impact of biochar in a community based biochar growing trial. Beeslack Community High School has a pair of beds in one of the polytunnels to take part in this trial, which adopts a citizen science approach.</p> <p>S6 pupils were instrumental in getting the second polytunnel up and running for the biochar growing trial in June this year.</p>

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