

## **Education and Culture Committee**

### **Outdoor Learning**

#### **Submission from Mark Baker**

There is significant conceptual confusion between play, outdoor learning, adventurous activities, outdoor residential education, physical education and learning for sustainability. There are different policy implications for children playing in sandpits in early years settings and organisations taking pupils mountaineering in Glencoe. Whilst each activity is appropriately housed under one outdoor learning umbrella (which provides useful 3-18 progression), the implications for funding, successful policy implementation and effective policy evaluation are significant and problematic.

I encourage the committee to explore the above conundrum and the following areas.

- to question why five day residential outdoor education provision has not yet happened across Scotland - is it simply politics and funding? All pupils in North Lanarkshire have access to an outdoor residential experience.
- to question why Education Scotland does not have a fully funded national officer for outdoor learning after five previous positions? The current position is welcome but is partnered to the National Parks.
- Is Learning for Sustainability (LfS) in danger of hijacking the tradition of outdoor education in Scotland? Whilst LfS is a vitally important area of policy, is the emphasis placed on the LfS recommendations at the detriment of adventure activities and residential outdoor education?
- to question how Education Scotland inspects outdoor learning in schools and residential outdoor education centres. Placing the weight of the inspectorate behind outdoor learning in schools and residential outdoor education with suggestions for wider CfE integration, improvements and future developments would be a significant step.
- Would the sector would benefit from an 'Outdoor Learning Champion' working directly for the Scottish Government across portfolios, (e.g. education, health, environment, justice) between national organisations (e.g. Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education, National Parks, Education Scotland, Inspiring Scotland) and with front end providers of outdoor learning?
- How can the type and volume of outdoor learning be effectively monitored?

Mark Baker