

Education Outside the Classroom Manifesto

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 30
January 2006

Your comments must reach us by that date.

department for

education and skills

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The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Name Jonathan Breckon
Organisation (if applicable) Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers
Address: 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact Adrian Gough on:

Telephone: 020 7925 5929

e-mail: adrian.gough@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 01928 794888

Fax: 01928 794 113

e-mail: consultation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Please insert 'X' in one of the following boxes that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Governor/Governing Body	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Years Setting
<input type="checkbox"/> Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School	<input type="checkbox"/> Special School
<input type="checkbox"/> Pupil Referral Unit	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Provider of out-of-classroom learning activities
<input type="checkbox"/> School support staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Head teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> School Workforce Union
<input type="checkbox"/> Other X (please specify)		

Please Specify: The Royal Geographical Society (with The Institute of British Geographers) is the learned society and professional body representing geography and geographers. We are a provider of training, funding and advice on fieldwork and outdoor education for teachers, students, parents and youth leaders. We also organise and host out-of-classroom school visits to our collections at our London headquarters.

We are a member of the Real World Learning (RWL) Partnership founded by the RSPB, Field Studies Council, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, National Trust and PGL in 2003. We believe that all children should be entitled to experience outdoor learning as an integral component of their school career.

1 Would you sign up to the vision statement outlined? If not, why not? Please suggest alternative wording.

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments:

We support the vision statement

2 Do you think that together the key aims broadly say what the Manifesto should do? [The key aims should be for everyone to agree with whether they, for example, work at a city farm, a gallery, a heritage site or a school.]

Yes

No

Not sure

3 Are there any of the key aims that you disagree with? If so, why? Are there any that you think should be added?

Comments: There is no mention at all of geography in the consultation document. While we commend the commitment to 'learning in all subjects' set out in Aim One, the reality is that a subject such as geography has education outside the classroom at its core. Geography is the only subject that has statutory reference to the provision of fieldwork in school, and indeed the importance of fieldwork is also fully recognised in the benchmarking of geography in Higher Education (Quality Assurance Agency, 2000). Fieldwork has been fully recognised in the programmes of study for the National Curriculum, key stages 1, 2 and 3. For example, at key stage 3, students must 'carry out fieldwork investigations outside the classroom' (DfEE and QCA, 1999). Education outside the classroom can benefit all subjects within the curriculum but for geography it is one of the 'subject-specific essentials' (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2003).

Comments on the list of aims:

AIM 1 – revise to include one residential at primary, and one at secondary level, stressing need for these to be a part of a coherent and progressive programme

AIM 2 – revise to ‘support and encourage’; include specific reference to ‘training’ with respect to Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)

AIM 3 – also engage with teaching unions to allay fears of litigation, and ensure revision of union guidance to teachers

AIM 4 – this would seem to make more sense as being the first in the list of aims/top priority as it encapsulates what the Manifesto is trying to achieve. The role of Government is critical, and needs to be drawn from the subtext to the headline. Include also the role ITT and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) need to play, plus inclusion in Ofsted self-evaluation forms (SEF) or Spotlight Inspections. Particular emphasis also on influencing head teachers and governors.

AIM 5 – it is important that education outside the classroom becomes an integral part of a child’s education. Whilst parents and carers will play a role in this, it is important that teachers are formally enabled and helped to take up education opportunities outside the classroom.

AIM 6 – rather than just ‘encouraging’ partnerships, there needs to be action to facilitate and enable schools to work efficiently and effectively with all providers, including funding opportunities

AIM 7 – this would definitely help to enable partnership working, but standards need to be clearly defined and easy for all (providers and teachers) to interpret. There is a risk of trying to provide too much information through the standard (over and above meeting minimum requirements) which may serve to confuse and reduce participation.

AIM 8 – this is likely to represent one of the biggest challenges to the providers, so (financial) commitment of support and facilitation from Government is critical here. Further guidance is also required on how inclusion within extended schools would actually be expected to work. Current phrasing of this aim could also be improved.

4 Do you agree that education outside the classroom makes a unique contribution to the education and development of children and young people?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	

Comments: Education outside the classroom makes a unique contribution to a geographical education. It helps bringing the geography curriculum alive in the real world – and allows the real work to stimulate pupils' curiosity and learning back in the classroom. Indeed it is possible to argue that if pupils do not take part in geographically based fieldwork that are not undertaking the full statutory range of their geographical education. As the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) puts it, fieldwork is one of the 'subject-specific essentials' (QCA, 2003)

Learning outside the classroom also provides a unique and important contribution to a young person's development in that it builds upon and engages young peoples' experiences, it challenges them in settings they are not accustomed to, and encourages team building skills and confidence building.

Another important benefit of outdoor education is that it offers a positive opportunity for students to examine and evaluate risk and thus to learn about risk management as a life skill. Schools already directly address issues of risk, choice and the implications of behaviour within established areas of the curriculum e.g. sex education/relationships and also drugs education. Why not therefore address risk positively in the case of outdoor education?

Education outside the classroom can also have a unique benefit to teachers themselves – encouraging leadership, building positive relationships between pupils and teachers and reinforcing their subject interest and expertise. According to a fieldwork and outdoor education working group that was part of the Action Plan for Geography to be launched in Spring 2006 (a collaboration between the DfES, Geographical Association and RGS-IBG), many geography teachers value their involvement fieldwork and list it as an important reason for taking up geography teaching in the first place. Teacher-led fieldwork and outdoor education should remain an important part of provision.

5 Do you agree that education outside the classroom should be an integral part of every young person's education?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strongly	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor
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agree	disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree

Comments: Education outside the classroom should not be an integral part of every young person's education just for the sake of it. It must be high quality learning experience – not just a leisure 'trip' - and involve progression and meet students personalised learning needs. It is essential that fieldwork retains its status throughout the teaching of geography.

6 Would you be willing to be a signatory to the Manifesto?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	x Not sure
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Comments: We strongly support the vision of the Manifesto, and belief in the essential role it should play in every child's education. The current draft Manifesto set out in this consultation is, however, dominated by 'warm words', as the Education and Skills Select Committee warned in its inquiry into education outside the classroom (the Education and Skills Select Committee, September 2004).

We are willing to be a signatory to the Manifesto, but only if there are more substantive commitments that will boost fieldwork and learning beyond the classroom. The aims are commendable but there are no tangible goals, actions or even a timetable by which to measure success. The only concrete commitment is to 'at least one residential experience' for all children. There needs to be specific, measurable, achievable and realistic targets. For example, the nine sector working groups have recommended some practical proposals for the Manifesto and, at the very least, it is hoped that these should be included in the Manifesto document.

We recommend the following additions to the Manifesto:

- ensure an Educational Visits Coordinator in every school
- increase the demand and supply of training, advice and resources through

subject-specific Continued Professional Development and Initial Teacher Training. This should be specifically targeted at fieldwork and outdoor education rather than generic training. The aim is to encourage primary and secondary teachers to have the confidence and knowledge to provide high-quality outdoor geographical learning, including especially fieldwork in and about the local area.

- create a 'family of quality marks' for fieldwork, outdoor education, expeditions
- ensure that out of classroom learning becomes part of the school's Ofsted self-evaluation forms (SEF) subject to 'spotlight' inspections, and always included in Quality & Curriculum Authority annual subject reports.
- establishing partnerships with the three main teaching unions to overcome the fear of litigation

Without making such commitments now, the Manifesto will lack any substance and potentially present nothing more than statements of ambition.

7 Would you be willing to make a pledge/contribution to one or more of the goals? Are you able to say in outline what that pledge might be?

X Yes

No

Comments: We are willing to make a pledge but hope that they are matched by commitments in the Manifesto by the Government and other key stakeholders. Potential pledges from the RGS-IBG are as follows:

- Develop a British Standard Institution (BSI) 'kitemark' for 'outdoor adventurous activities, expeditions and fieldwork — guidelines on safety management for outdoor activities overseas'. It is intended to build on existing UK guidance and will involve wide consultation to benchmark current good practice that could then be used as a voluntary standard by anyone organising such activities overseas.
- Pilot a project to promote the use of ICT and new technologies such as Geographical Information Sciences – digital mapping and spatial analysis of data and information that has revolutionised geography in academia, business, government and beyond - to enhance the fieldwork experience.
- Secure the continuing inclusion of fieldwork within the Quality Assurance

Agency geography benchmark statement in the forthcoming review of the benchmark. Ensure the importance of vibrant fieldwork in HE sector is fully recognised so that geography graduates that become teachers have experienced high-quality fieldwork themselves

Questions 8 and 9 are aimed specifically at parents and carers.

8 Do you believe that children and young people get something special from learning outside the classroom (for example - going on a field trip, visiting a place of worship or theatre, volunteering in the community or going on an overseas expedition)?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments: n/a

9 How often do you think children and young people should be given the opportunity to learn outside the classroom?

Every week

Every month

Every school term

Every year

Comments: n/a

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

Here at the Department for Education and Skills we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

XYes

No

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Cabinet Office Website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/introduction/index.asp>

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 30 January 2006

Send by e-mail to: eotcmanifesto.consultation@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Send by post to: Consultation Unit, Area 1A, Castle View House, East Lane,
Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2GJ