

cascade

Learning Outside of the Classroom to build resilience



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Aims:

What is Learning Outside of the Classroom: where could this be?

What is meant by resilience?

What does this look like at Banks House School?

How does Learning Outside of the classroom build resi

What impact has this had on our young people?

What impact has it had on staff?



What is learning outside of the classroom?

The Learning outside the classroom manifesto (2006), defines LOTC as “The use of places other than the classroom for teaching and learning.”

<https://thegrowingschoolsgarden.org.uk/downloads/lotc-manifesto.pdf>

House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee Transforming Education Outside the Classroom (2010) defines the term ‘learning outside the classroom’ as encompassing a range of provision, including:

- activities within a school’s or college’s own buildings, grounds or immediate area;
- participation in drama productions, concerts and other special events;
- involvement in clubs, musical groups and sporting activities held during break times and before or after the school day;
- educational visits organised within the school day; and
- residential visits that take place during the school week, a weekend or holiday.

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmchilsch/418/418.pdf>

‘Centre for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC) is the use of places other than the classroom for teaching and learning including in your settings grounds; visiting local places such as religious buildings, shops and natural spaces; and further afield on day visits to museums, heritage sites, theatres, field and adventure centres and residential. It also includes experiences brought into school through visitors and events.’ <https://www.lotc.org.uk/educators/i-work-in-education/lotc-what-and-why/>

Where could this be?

softplay trees abroad
galleries snowsports theatres
police stations cafes
crate-stacking cinema museums trim trail
skate parks shops woods school horseriding
walks zoos hikes farms historical sites trains
playground field libraries ponds mudwalks
post office parks swimming climbing
canoeing gardens buses battlefields
football pitches places of worship
nature reserves galas go-carting

What is meant by resilience?

Flourish Ambition: Resilience: Children and young people have the confidence and skills to make their own decisions and take on life's challenges

Oxford English Dictionary: being able to recover

Cambridge Dictionary: the ability to be happy, successful again after something difficult or bad has happened



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What does LotC look like at Banks House School?

Netmums: [The ONE simple habit 'great' parents do to raise resilient kids, says psychologist](#) On The Mel Robbins Podcast, psychologist Angela Duckworth

- **Pay attention** to what your child naturally gravitates towards – the things they think about, watch or read without prompting.
- **Let them try** a mix of activities before steering them anywhere specific.
- **Notice the quiet clues.** Their interests often show up in small ways first.
- **Encourage them to finish things**, even just to the next natural milestone. Seeing something through builds confidence.
- **Interests don't have to become careers** – they can simply be part of who they are.
- **Skill often fuels passion.** Helping your child build competence can spark deeper enthusiasm later.
- **Curiosity matters.** When a child talks about something they genuinely care about, you can often hear the confidence in their voice.



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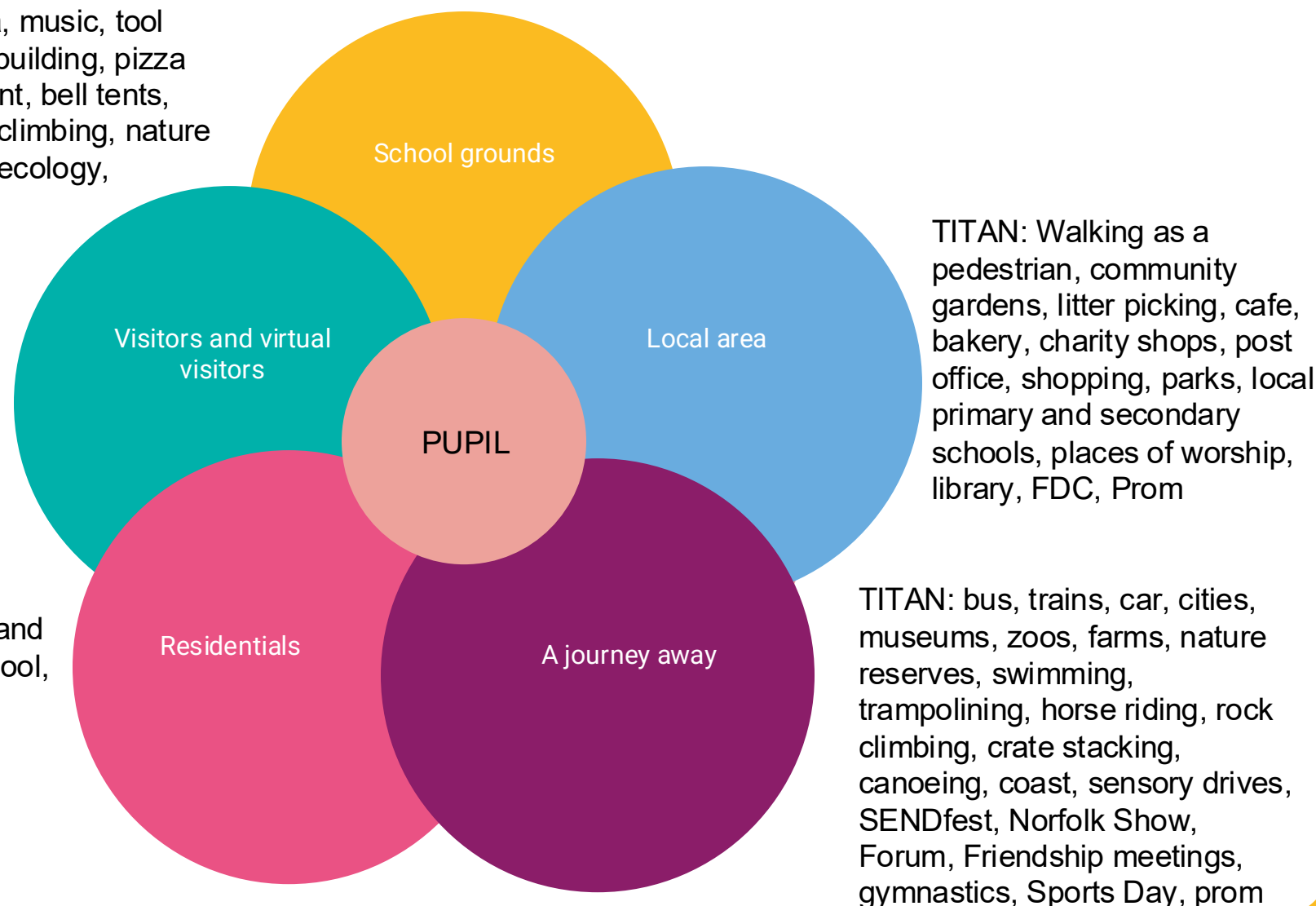


What does LotC look like at Banks House School?

Woodland zones: yoga, music, tool area, hammocks, den building, pizza oven, fire pits, safari tent, bell tents, dress up, swings, tree climbing, nature walks, treasure hunts, ecology,

Religious leaders,
Local charities, First responders,
Orchestral performances, pets, family members

Butlins, Disney Land
Paris, Spain, School, Tents



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Routine and Predictability v sabotage!

TIER 1 Memory building

Introduction of the task; repetition (as many times as required by the individual learner) of the task; understanding what is required to complete the task. The learner might not be introduced to the problem until you are reasonably sure that they can complete the task without support or, if physical support is needed because of physical disability, can recognise that 'something is wrong'.

TIER 2 Sabotage!! Recognition of a problem

Recognising that something is different or that a required element of the task is not to hand; recognition that asking for help from a member of staff is a minimum requirement for solving the problem.

ROUTINE, ORDER, CERTAINTY, STRUCTURE

“the confidence and skills to make their own decisions and take on life's challenges”



“being successful again after something difficult or bad has happened”

TIER 3 Independent solutions

Recognition of what the problem is and that the problem can be resolved without asking a member of staff for help; evaluating this one solution; questioning whether the same problem can be avoided in the future.

TIER 4 Generalisation

Recognition that a solution to a similar but unrelated problem can be adapted; recognition that there may be several possible solutions to the problem, including asking peers for help; evaluating whether the solution chosen was the best one.

TIER 5 Self-belief and confidence

Being secure in their choice of solution even when challenged by a member of staff or someone the learner considers to be in authority; recognising that there might be no solution that is immediately available and being secure in this choice when challenged. These might be considered to be higher order problem solving skills but they are essential in the long term to truly enable learners to be independent.



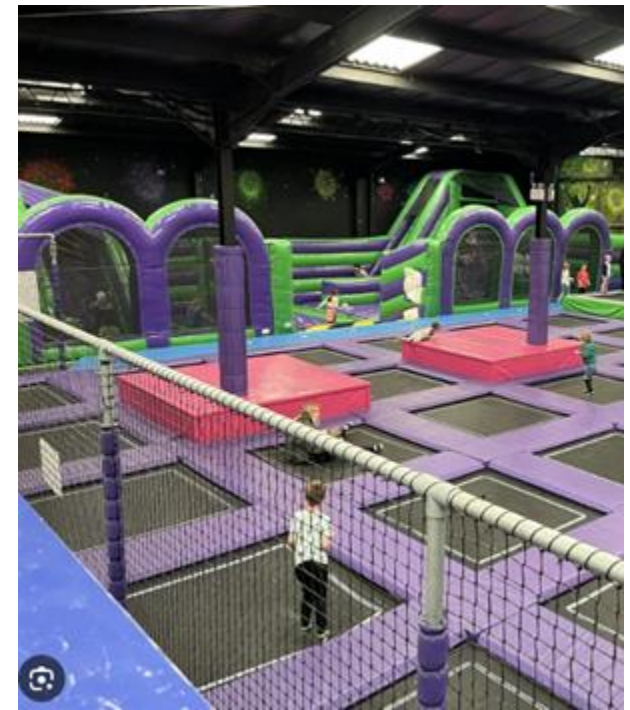
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How does learning outside of the classroom build resilience? What do others say about lotc?

CLOtC:

- **Improves health and wellbeing** – teaching in different spaces helps break down barriers and has been proven to increase happiness and reduce stress levels for both pupils and teachers.
- **Improves engagement** – by making learning more enjoyable and inspiring learning, leads to increased attainment and progress.
- **Leads to better relationships** – between teachers and pupils
- **Makes learning active** – helping to tackle develop positive life-long behaviours whilst improving learning and retention.





Professor Kathy Willis: [podcast](#) (06:49-11:14) and [BBC news](#)

Each sense triggers different mechanisms in our bodies that brings about positive health benefits:

1. **YOUR RELAX** Autonomic nervous system - triggers changes in body that lowers blood pressure, heart beats go lower (hearing birds, seeing green, hearing rain falling)
2. **YOUR HORMONES REBOOT** Hormonal system - changes in cortisol and adrenaline
3. **CALMING** Volatile organic compound smells - molecules pass into your blood and act as if you are taking a prescription drug. Clinical setting showed that Pine - calmer in 20 seconds
4. **GOOD BACTERIA INTO YOUR GUT** Natural environments are full of good bacteria - your body adopts the microbio of the nature - nursery school chn in finland. Looked at skin and gut bacteria over 28 days. Those who had played in sand and those that had played in soil. Soil - tcells elevated (white blood cell that are a crucial part of the immune system, responsible for fighting infection and protecting the body from pathogens like bacteria and viruses, as well as cancer cells), skin and gut bacteria better

Ofsted

Ofsted, in its 2008 review of LOfC fully supported the notion of providing young people with first hand experience away from the classroom as they 'can help make the subject more vivid and interesting for pupils', whilst also contributing to 'pupils personal, social and emotional development'.

David Gwillam - Educational Visits Officer in North Yorkshire looked at the link between school ofsted gradings and LOfC. What he found was that there is a strong correlation: 'Ofsted will comment in the first four paragraphs if its really positive or in the section about Personal Development'.

If I look at ours, June 2024 - outstanding...

Paragraph 2 - The school's ambitious, child-led curriculum and well-designed physical environment are instrumental in helping pupils to thrive. Pupils are given excellent support to manage their behaviour effectively. They thoroughly enjoy using their outdoor sensory space with crunchy bark flooring, cushions and a swing to use when they need to.

Paragraph 3 - Pupils engage in activities that are designed to closely meet their developmental needs. Pupils enjoy exploring objects on a sensory tray, developing their curiosity with water sprinklers, choosing and listening to music or kicking a football. They know they have the option to participate in trips such as swimming or horse riding. If they choose not to, staff quickly adapt their plans and provide equally beneficial activities for them.

Other comments about LOfC included:

Adults engage pupils in a wide range of personalised and enticing activities which support their development. Some pupils learn how to take a bus with support from adults. Others learn how to play alongside their peers or make a choice between Inspection report: Banks House School 18 to 20 June 2024.

Staff focus tirelessly on preparing pupils for adult life. This includes trips to places of worship and activity clubs, woodland walks and forest school experiences. Pupils really benefit from using transport and interacting with others.

Barriers to LOtC

Article in the LotC Yearbook 2026: How lived experiences impact teachers' views of LOtC
by Nick O'Loughlin

Completing a PhD on the link between lived experiences of subject leaders and their relationship to LOtC

What he found is that LOtC would not take place without passionate teachers, who are willing to do this, dedicating their time. It is a huge responsibility and can be out of their comfort zone

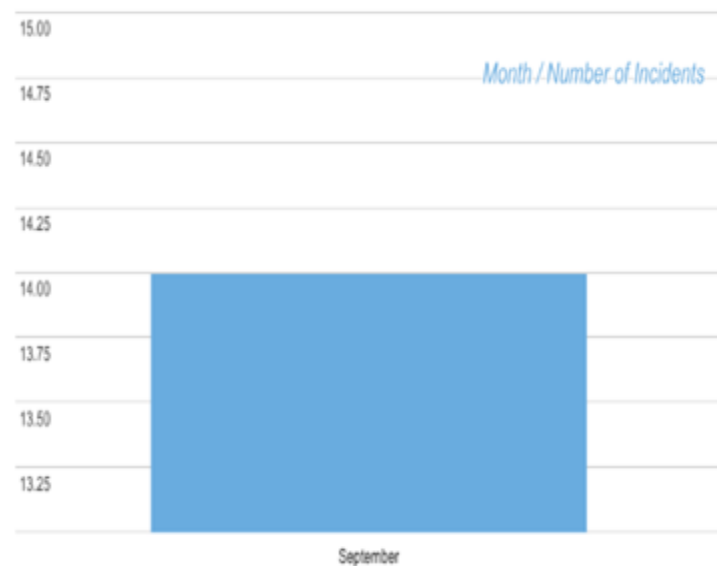
Barriers:

- [Rickinson et al \(2004\)](#) fear of health and safety, lack of time, resources
- [O'Donnell et al \(2006\)](#) teachers confidence: Geography teachers - most confident and maths teachers least confident

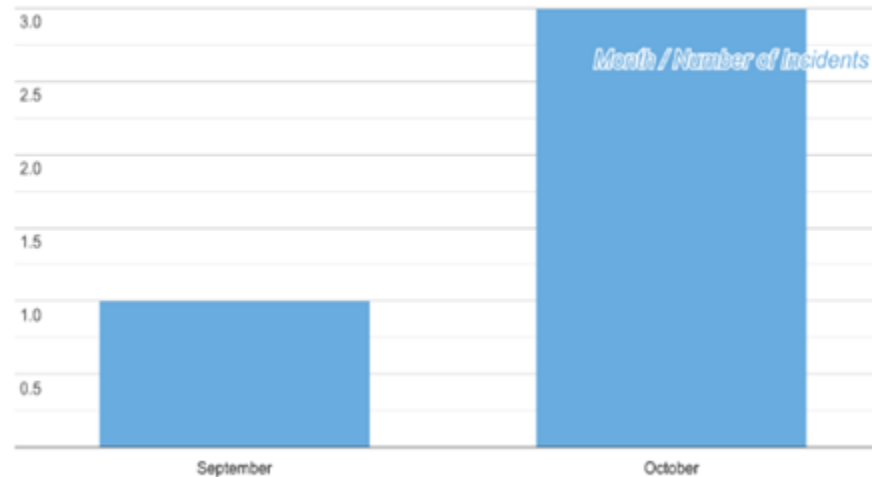
What impact has this had on our young people?

Less incidents - relaxed - calmer

Months Incidents Occurred



Months Incidents Occurred



What impact has this had on our young people?

Participation in society - growing independence

Our pupils learn the untaught skills needed to access: a shop - take a basket or a trolley, be prepared with a £1 coin! Personal space with other shoppers, waiting until there is space to look, placing items in the trolley carefully, not putting heavy items on top of bread, they are unlikely to get a toy every time we enter a shop, waiting to eat until we return, comparing prices, different ways to pay, bagging up, meets and greets, exiting.

Practising these skills regularly provides our pupils with the confidence to participate in everyday activities. We help them feel part of something bigger than themselves.

When our pupils learn together, they get to see how their involvement can have a positive effect on others as well as themselves. E.g. climbing, trampolining

What impact has this had on our young people?

Unlocking potential - speech

When it comes to building resilience, it really is all about the journey and not just the destination! When we only celebrate the wins, we instil a belief that the only thing that matters is success. In order to build a positive mindset and a willingness to grow, it's important to focus on progress and not just success. This can be done through providing open feedback to students that focuses on their effort rather than the outcome. Fostering positive relationships between pupils and staff, built on trust and mutual respect where the tiniest of steps are Praised - where effort is recognised.

Celebrating progress not just success - When we only celebrate the wins, we instil a belief that the only thing that matters is success.

Quentin Blake
MISTER
MAGNOLIA



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In November 2023 'A' started climbing at Eaton Vale. During the first 3 weeks 'A' paced up and down alongside the climbing wall, touching and making banging noises on the wall and touching his hands on the holds. On week 4, he allowed staff members to put on his climbing harness but wouldn't wear his helmet.

He continued to allow staff to put on the climbing harness each week and after modelling wearing a helmet each session, on week 5, 'A' allowed a staff member to put on his helmet. He then started to explore the climbing wall area and indicated to the climbing instructor that he wanted to be clipped on the safety rope. At each session, 'A' will wear his helmet and harness and be clipped on the safety rope ready to climb. He enjoys swinging from side to side at the bottom of the climbing wall.

In Dec 2024 'A' climbed to the top of the climbing wall, pressing the button! Having practised and preserved over the last year, he was then able to apply the skills he had learnt, climbing up the wall with one of his peers - where he enjoyed sharing and enjoying this activity with a friend.



Safe and supportive learning environments

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What impact has this had on our young people?

Generalising skills in different contexts - cooking at school, cooking on a fire/pizza oven



Exposing learners to unpredictable and uncertain environments, where they have to problem solve, adapt, wait. Each time they are pushed a little outside of their comfort zone, they grow in confidence. They learn cause and effect - when this happened this happened and it was ok/not ok and how they overcame this. It encourages teamwork, trust and communication. It builds relationships. LotC gives pupils choices and responsibilities.

Making their world bigger

The easiest thing would be to keep our pupils inside 4 walls, less risk, less judgement

A pupil that liked to be in 4 walls, couldn't get him to forest school

NOW

He doesn't want to come to the 4 walls!

Less incidents

Shift from coregulation to self regulation

Pupils who say 'woodland cabin'

Exploring the world around them



What impact has it had on staff?

Incidents decreased 14 - 4

Niggles decreased

Skills expanding

“Want to come to work”

“Every day is different”

Some staff have left because it is not right for them - that's ok

“I get to see what is on offer in the shops!”

“It has taught me to problem solve and to think outside of the box. When there is just a woodland - you have to be prepared with possible natural activities”

“We talk more to each other. We look at the clouds and spot different road signs. We have conversations about road kill and what is inside animals”

“Being outside is a kind of therapy for me to - I am happier - cold maybe but happier!”

The PE Life Skills Award



The PE Life Skills Award is the only award that recognises and rewards students for developing life skills through PE.

PE nurtures vital qualities such as resilience, collaboration, self-belief, and problem solving all of which empower children to thrive both in school and in life. Yet much of this personal growth often goes unrecognised.

Now in its fifth year, the award offers teachers a simple, curriculum-aligned way to develop, assess and celebrate these life skills. It helps students value PE and develop a positive, lasting relationship with physical activity.

By guiding learning beyond just the physical, the award supports a more holistic approach to PE helping pupils build character, confidence, and transferable life skills. The award is flexible, easy to embed within existing curriculum plans, and can be adapted to suit your pupils' needs.

The award is suitable for all key stages, including SEND and AP settings. It can also be purchased by primary schools using their PE and Sport Premium funding – a strong and effective use of the grant to enhance character education and whole-child outcomes.

All purchases are made via the [Leadership Skills Foundation](#).

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1. Introduction for School Leaders

1 Raising Attainment with Wellbeing | For School Leaders

Course

★ 4.5 (15 reviews)

Supports leadership teams to forensically analyse the social and emotional "health" of their setting, through policy review an...



2. Wellbeing and Core Strength

2 Wellbeing and Core Strength

Course

★ 5.0 (2 reviews)

Explores the critical relationship between emotional wellbeing and mental health, and the impact these two factors can hav...



3. Making sense of behaviour

3 Making sense of behaviour

Course

★ 4.0 (8 reviews)

Gives education professionals a deeper insight into childhood trauma, neglect, attachment issues and the impact these...



4. Changing culture and climate

4 Changing culture and climate

Course

★ 5.0 (3 reviews)

Offers a rich seam of developmental tools, strategies and approaches aimed at transforming the culture and climate of...



5. Accelerating Development

5 Accelerating Development

Course

Assembled for your consideration, including tools to build cognition, the introduction of Assistive Technologies to...



6. Physical Health & Wellbeing

6 Physical Health & Wellbeing

Course

Offers a rich seam of developmental tools, strategies and approaches aimed at transforming the culture and climate of...

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