

REAL WORLD LEARNING CAMPAIGN

Remember what it felt like the first time you felt sand between your toes? Experienced the noise and smell of a steam locomotive? Or tried paddling a canoe? Yes?

Well, thousands of children growing up today have never experienced those things. They do not learn about the world through first hand experience; their knowledge is based on what is taught in a classroom or on a computer.

But can children really learn about the real world without experiencing it for themselves? Learning outside the classroom complements the target-driven, academic approach of school work. If done well, it can have a lasting impact on children.

The Real World Learning campaign partnership – National Trust, RSPB, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Field Studies Council and PGL Travel Ltd – believes there is no substitute for learning out of the classroom.

What is real world learning?

It is a chance to get out of the classroom and experience nature and culture first hand rather than learning from a blackboard, textbook or computer screen. It is the chance to hunt for bugs, get lost in a historic maze, marvel at the size of a dinosaur's teeth, or appreciate the darkness of a cave or forest.

What are the benefits?

Learning out of the classroom can:

- ✓ Inspire and change lives
- ✓ Instill a sense of pride and ownership in the local environment
- ✓ Improve mental and physical health
- ✓ Help develop new skills
- ✓ Be lots of fun!

Why are children not taking part in school trips?

There are lots of reasons why many children are missing out on out-of-classroom visits. These include:

- ✗ Fear of accidents and legal action
- ✗ Increasingly busy timetable
- ✗ Low importance given to out-of-classroom teaching
- ✗ Lack of support from one teacher union
- ✗ Cost



FSC

“Actually being able to see makes it much easier to understand.”

Sixth Form, residential



FSC

“I feel like a pioneer discovering secrets.”

KS2, day visit



NTPL/D. Levenson

REAL WORLD LEARNING CAMPAIGN

What does the Real World Learning campaign want Government to do?

Without change, children will continue missing out on invaluable learning opportunities. The campaign is urging MPs to:

- Ensure out-of-classroom learning becomes part of the school self-evaluation process
- Establish partnerships with teacher unions to overcome fears of legal action and provide reassurance for parents
- Ensure children have a good experience by developing teacher training programmes
- Help organisations deliver out-of-classroom learning to agreed standards
- Create an out-of-classroom manifesto supported by resources to deliver its objectives

What about safety concerns?

There are very real fears surrounding school visits, but in reality the number of incidents occurring is very small. Providers take seriously the need to ensure safe and secure environments for activities, but children do need an opportunity to learn about risk, and out-of-classroom visits can provide this.

What are we doing?

The Real World Learning campaign partners host visits for 1.5 million school children each year, but this is well below capacity and numbers have fallen by 10% in the last five years.

The partnership is undertaking a range of initiatives to raise the profile of out-of-classroom learning:

- Tabling an Early Day Motion signed by over 170 MPs
- Seeking manifesto commitments from each political party
- Hosting a Parliamentary reception on the issue of Real World Learning
- Giving evidence at the Education and Skills Select Committee inquiry into out-of-classroom learning
- Devising a template risk assessment document to ensure consistency of experience across providers
- Developing guidance for parents and teachers on what constitutes a quality out-of-classroom experience

Contact: Real World Learning,
c/o Field Studies Council,
Preston Mountford, Shrewsbury, SY4 1HW.
Telephone: 01743 852100. Fax: 01743 852101.
Email: rwl@field-studies-council.org



“I would have liked to stay a lot longer... a whole year perhaps”

KS3, residential



“I caught 15 stickleback fish, a couple of beetles, some water snails and many other amazing creatures. I had a lovely day.”

KS2, day visit

