

Council for Learning Outside the Classroom Update

*Beth Gardner, Chief Executive of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom,
updates us on the latest news from the Council*

As autumn is upon us, it has been just 6 months since the Council took over full responsibility for Learning Outside the Classroom, and what a busy 6 months it has been! We have so many opportunities (and possibly a few challenges!) ahead but have already achieved some important steps towards our goal of raising the profile of LOtC and its proven benefit to the social, emotional and educational development of children and young people as well as establishing the Council as the leading national voice for Learning Outside the Classroom.



**Council for
Learning Outside the Classroom**

The Council opens its doors to members

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom has launched its membership scheme this week. We are inviting individuals and organisations with an interest in Learning Outside the Classroom to support our aims by taking up membership today.

Developing a strong membership base is vital for the Council and is about so much more than gaining the opportunity to vote at the AGM on 3rd December. The more members we have, the louder our voice will be when campaigning for learning outside the classroom and the more powerful our influence when seeking to positively influence policy and practice. As well as the potential for our membership scheme to provide a sustainable and independent source of funding enabling us to continue to support you into the future, it will enable the Council to fully represent the needs of those involved in LOtC across a broad spectrum and help us to build a base of committed, engaged and loyal supporters.

If you believe in the benefits of learning outside the classroom, wish to have your say on policy and best practice and want to help to raise the profile of learning outside the classroom then we need your support. Membership of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom will enable you to demonstrate your commitment to the provision of high quality and varied LOtC experiences and give you the opportunity to shape the future of the Council at this exciting time, helping your voice to be heard where it matters.

Over the coming months we will be developing a package of membership benefits based on feedback on what is important to you as our membership base grows. For an application pack please email enquiries@lotc.org.uk

Learning Outside the Classroom - 2010 and Beyond

Radio 4 broadcaster Hilary Wilce has been confirmed as the keynote speaker for our first Annual Conference, Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) - 2010 and Beyond, which will be held on 3rd December 2009 at the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds.

We will shortly be announcing an exciting and engaging programme which will include:

- Influential speakers talking on topical issues shaping LOtC in 2010 and beyond
- Open debate on 'Barriers to LOtC'
- A variety of practical and supportive LOtC workshops
- The Council's first AGM and elections to the Board of Trustees and
- The announcement and presentation of the national and regional winners of the LOtC Awards in Excellence and Innovation 2009 – In association with award sponsors TUI.

Places are limited, so to be amongst the first to receive the confirmed programme and booking details please email enquiries@lotc.org.uk

Primary Curriculum developments

As many of you will be aware, the Primary Curriculum Reform Consultation came to an end in July. The Council was pleased to see that learning and thinking skills, personal and emotional skills and social skills were all recognised as being essential for development, yet felt that there should be a more explicit reference to the established term "Learning Outside the Classroom", in line with other national policies and strategies. Amongst its other responses, the Council also highlighted within its response the strong emphasis which the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum places on the value of outdoor experiences for children's learning and development, and the omission of a similar approach within the reform proposals, resulting in a serious omission for transitional learners and for planning progression across the primary phase. The QCDA's full reports from the consultation, along with civil servant advice, will go to Ministers in a submission at the start of October to inform the new curriculum decisions.

2009 Learning Outside the Classroom Awards

The 2009 Learning Outside the Classroom Awards got off to a flying start with over 120 nominations. Run in association with TUI–Student Division, who are kindly sponsoring the awards, schools, early years settings and youth organisations were encouraged to enter and showcase their innovative use of learning outside the classroom and demonstrate the benefits of getting children out and about.

27 educational establishments have been shortlisted for the second round of judging, which will take place over the autumn term. Regional finalists, and the national winner, will be announced at the LOtC Conference on 3rd December.

Staff team now in place

I am pleased to announce that the Council now has an enthusiastic and dedicated team up and running. Amma Simpson - Business Support Coordinator; Amy Nathan - Project Development Co-ordinator and Elaine Skates - Head of Operations and Communications, have all joined me over the past few months in driving forward the Council's work programmes. We very much look forward to working in partnership with you to champion Learning Outside the Classroom.