

CASE STUDY
Newall Green High School
Manchester



**Winner of the Award for Best LOfC Provision 11-19 yrs (Key Stage 3-5),
sponsored by NST, in the LOfC Awards for Excellence & Innovation 2010**

Newall Green High School undertakes a range of LOfC activities to enrich pupil's experiences. The 3 main strands are: the learning away project, a rural dimension project and a residential project. The three projects are woven together to ensure a strategic and inclusive approach.

The learning away project is designed to identify and support families in need across a cluster of 3 primary schools and 1 secondary school. Families are identified through a multi-agency meeting that takes place within school. The programme for each residential and all follow up activities is tailored to the family, allowing long term developments in family life. This has been shown to have a massive impact on all the children in a family.

The learning away programme has the following overarching objectives: to break cycles of poverty and deprivation; to improve the self esteem of students and their parents; to provide families with the life skills required to become self reliant, successful and ambitious; to help families become inclusive members of society.

The rural studies programme is also personalised to the young people, allowing them to develop greater responsibility and respect of authority. There is an emphasis on the reasoning behind rules and boundaries.

Both the learning away programme and the rural studies programme are used with a targetted group of Year 9 students. These students are at risk of permanent exclusion and are not making the progress expected of them in main stream school. Activities have been carefully planned to improve the outcomes for Year 9 students and their families. There is a also a huge effect across the school and learning is improved for all pupils.

In the rural studies programme, high school students act as leaders on farm visit activities for groups of Year 5 students from the 3 partner primary schools. This allows transition work to take place, increasing the confidence and motivation of Year 5 students in choosing and attending their secondary school. The Year 5 activities at the farm are used to broaden the Key Stage 2 science course and form the stimulus for creative writing activities in school for the following week. The joint activity gives the opportunity for high school students to develop responsibility and leadership skills. There is a strong emphasis on conservation and sustainability in all the activities, balanced with enterprise and small business skills. In addition, personal learning and thinking skills are developed through team work activities. High school students at the farm are able to build up a range of vocational qualifications. These are especially important as these students would be in danger of not achieving 5 good GCSE grades by the end of Year 11.

At the start of term, the whole of Newall Green High School has an activities week. As many students as possible are encouraged to go out on a residential. Each year group has a different residential programme, allowing a large range of skills and qualities to be developed. The residential programme started in 2005 and has built up each year. For the last three years there have been around five hundred students on residential in the first week of term. The residentials are themed and have clear objectives for example this year, Year 10 went on an outward bound holiday in Dorset. The theme for this activity was 'working outside my comfort zone'. Students were challenged with a range of activities that challenged them as individuals or as teams. All the groups had an adult leader who was very much part of the team and equally 'working outside their comfort zone'.

Ninety Year 9 students went on visits to Manchester Metropolitan University and Salford University as a part of their Aim Higher programme, taking time to discuss their future plans and options. In addition, 250 students went to Blackpool pleasure beach. The activities week is carefully planned and seeks to involve all students in the high school in a programme of transition, team building, leadership and motivational development. In a questionnaire, students often cite the first week of term as being most enjoyable.

These residential experiences are particularly important as many children do not leave their local area at all during the school holidays.