

Section 2 The strands of Learning Outside the Classroom



The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC Council) suggests the following eight strands which are relevant to the school grounds and local area:

<p>LOtC Strand 1</p>	School grounds	<p>LOtC Strand 5</p>	Natural environment
<p>LOtC Strand 2</p>	Heritage	<p>LOtC Strand 6</p>	Farming and countryside
<p>LOtC Strand 3</p>	Arts and creativity	<p>LOtC Strand 7</p>	Sacred spaces
<p>LOtC Strand 4</p>	Built environment	<p>LOtC Strand 8</p>	Adventurous education

This section describes how each of these eight strands can be taught immediately outside the classroom – in the school grounds and local area. The section also includes case studies which detail real-life projects and activities. Ideas from these case studies can be easily adapted to be used in your school or educational setting.

LOtC Strand 1 School grounds

Why use the school grounds as a learning environment?

The most immediate area for Learning Outside the Classroom activities to take place is the school grounds. They are recognisable to the children, as they spend much of their free time outside, and are ideal places for practical, experiential learning. Outdoor learning activities allow children to find out about their environment for themselves, and are particularly beneficial to children who have a kinaesthetic learning style.

Learning Outside the Classroom can be formal or informal. Formal learning is where the grounds are used as an ‘outdoor classroom’ for fieldwork, investigations, art work, etc. Informal learning can be classified as ‘learning through play’ (which is most associated with the Early Years Foundation Stage, but is very valuable for all age groups) and is often initiated by the children themselves. For children to learn effectively, a stimulating environment with a good choice of resources is essential. The environment and the resources should also change regularly to encourage exploration and to continually motivate. So what better learning environment is there than the outdoors? There is an abundance of natural resources, which are always available, and there are frequent changes due to the weather and seasons.

As the school grounds are on the ‘doorstep’ of the classroom, there are no transport costs, minimal risk assessment is required, and activities can be delivered by school-based staff (not only teachers, but other staff, such as the caretaker or lunchtime supervisors, can also be involved). Lessons in the school grounds also offer opportunities for children to work collaboratively with their peers.

