



House of Commons
Children, Schools and Families
Committee

**Transforming
Education Outside the
Classroom**

Sixth Report of Session 2009–10

*Report, together with formal minutes, oral and
written evidence*

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The Children, Schools and Families Committee

The Children, Schools and Families Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Children, Schools and Families and its associated public bodies.

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Conclusions and recommendations

1. Learning outside the classroom is important, and the Department must provide adequate funding to achieve maximum impact. We see no reason for the very marked differential in funding levels between the Music Manifesto and the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, and request that the Department provide an explanation for the discrepancy. We believe that the allocation of a comparatively small sum would make an enormous difference to learning outside the classroom, and call on the Department to look again at the resources it has provided for the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom and the Quality Badge scheme. (Paragraph 15)
2. Learning outside the classroom must not become only the preserve of pupils from more affluent backgrounds or from the independent schools sector—all children should have opportunities to experience environments away from their local area, and to visit museums and galleries and other sites of interest, including the natural environment of the English countryside. We call on the Department to ensure that families' ability to pay is not a deterrent to schools offering or pupils participating in school trips and visits. We commend to the Department the principle of subsidies for children from low-income families for school trips. (Paragraph 19)
3. We are of the view that, to ensure that learning outside the classroom is taken seriously by all schools, there should be an individual entitlement within the National Curriculum to at least one out of school visit a term. (Paragraph 23)
4. The Department and the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency must ensure that the importance of such provision is indicated systematically throughout curriculum-related frameworks and materials. (Paragraph 24)
5. We recommend that Ofsted include learning outside the classroom provision—as part of the curriculum—in its inspection framework, and that the Department include pupils' access to such activities in the School Report Card. (Paragraph 25)
6. The Department should monitor the number and range of learning outside the classroom activities provided by schools. Analysis should include a breakdown by category of school and the socio-economic characteristics of the pupils taking part. (Paragraph 26)
7. The delay in getting revised health and safety guidance in place is disappointing. We urge the Department to publish this guidance at the earliest opportunity. Without a further drive to both ease concerns about litigation and root out the use of health and safety as an excuse for curtailing provision, the effort and funding that has been put into promoting learning outside the classroom will be wasted. (Paragraph 30)
8. We were impressed by the way in which some schools had found it possible to accommodate the 'rarely cover' provisions through, for example, the reorganisation of the school timetable. We were disappointed to learn that some school leaders seem to be interpreting the 'rarely cover' provisions as an excuse to prevent pupils and teachers from being out of school during the school day. We call on the Department

and the teacher unions to provide stronger leadership on this matter and to assist schools in planning their provision in the context of ‘rarely cover’. (Paragraph 40)

9. Learning outside the classroom has a range of potential supporters and powerful lobby groups to draw on—the science lobby in the universities, celebrity environmentalists, and the farming lobby, to name a few. The sector requires champions who are committed to promoting the educational and social benefits of learning outside the classroom. These champions are limited in what they can achieve without the back-up of sufficient resourcing of related initiatives, learning outside the classroom being made an entitlement within the National Curriculum and being covered in school inspections. (Paragraph 43)
10. We believe that each school should have an explicit policy on learning outside the classroom, covering both the educational and health and safety aspects of this provision. Schools should appoint a suitably trained learning outside the classroom co-ordinator to deliver the policy. (Paragraph 44)
11. Learning outside the classroom supports pupils’ learning and development. It has the potential to enrich and enliven teaching across all subjects. Teachers need to be exposed to learning outside the curriculum from early on in their career, and this should not be left to chance. We expect to see a clearer and more consistent presence for learning outside the classroom across initial teacher training and early career and ongoing professional development for teachers. (Paragraph 49)
12. We welcome the ‘Teaching Outside the Classroom’ scheme. We call on the Department and the Training and Development Agency for Schools to monitor take up of the scheme among providers of initial teacher training and to address any barriers to their participation. (Paragraph 50)

Summary

This Committee's predecessor, the Education and Skills Committee, published its Report *Education Outside the Classroom* in 2005. Since then, a very strong body of evidence has been established to show the benefits to pupils of learning outside the classroom. Alarming, evidence also suggests that children and young people are spending less and less time outside: for example, research by Natural England has found that the likelihood of a child visiting any green space at all has halved in a generation.

The Department has taken forward various initiatives that are intended to increase schools' commitment to, and confidence in, delivering such opportunities. Yet, five years on from our Report, we find ourselves coming to the same conclusions as our predecessor Committee. The funding of learning outside the classroom initiatives remains inadequate; teachers' health and safety concerns, which have been a significant barrier to school trips, have yet to be assuaged; and teacher training continues to pay scant attention to preparing teachers to lead learning outside the classroom. In the context of the 'rarely cover' provisions, it appears that some schools are not able or willing to plan learning outside the classroom provision far enough in advance to ensure that it is not adversely affected.

We call on the Department to increase substantially the resources devoted to learning outside the classroom, particularly the funding for the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom and the Quality Badge scheme, so that they can achieve much greater impact.

School trips and visits must not become only the preserve of pupils from more affluent backgrounds or the independent schools sector. On that basis, we were attracted by the idea of introducing subsidies for this provision.

We are of the view that learning outside the classroom, if it is to be taken seriously by all schools, needs to be made an entitlement within the National Curriculum. Learning outside the classroom should be considered by Ofsted as part of school inspections and be reflected in the School Report Card.

The Department must prioritise publication of revised health and safety guidance pertaining to learning outside the classroom.

Learning outside the classroom urgently needs high profile champions, within the Department and nationally.

Schools should have an explicit policy on learning outside the classroom and should appoint a member of their staff to take responsibility for delivering that policy.

The Department and the teacher unions must provide greater leadership to schools in terms of how they are interpreting the 'rarely cover' provisions and planning for learning outside the classroom in the context of those provisions.

Learning outside the classroom must have a clearer and more consistent presence across initial teacher training and early career and ongoing professional development provision for teachers.

1 Introduction

1. The term ‘learning outside the classroom’ encompasses 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.¹

2. In 2005 the Committee’s predecessor, the Education and Skills Committee, published its Report *Education Outside the Classroom*.² The Report noted the benefits of learning outside the classroom in terms of supporting pupils’ academic attainment and their development of ‘soft’ skills and social skills, especially for ‘hard to reach’ children and young people. Provision of learning outside the classroom was found to be “extremely patchy”, while the evidence revealed a widespread perception that there was a high degree of risk involved in offering such opportunities. Cumbersome bureaucracy and issues of funding, time and resources were also found to lessen schools’ commitment to providing opportunities for learning outside the classroom.

3. In response to that Report, the Department has put in place a number of initiatives. In 2006 the Department published a manifesto for learning outside the classroom. This provides a ‘shared vision’ and statement of common intent for relevant organisations and practitioners. The overarching objective of the Manifesto is that “every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances”.³ There are now 1,920 signatories to the Manifesto, including schools, local authorities, museums and outdoor centres. In 2008 the Department launched the ‘Quality Badge’ scheme, through which providers of learning outside the classroom opportunities can gain accreditation to show the quality of their provision and their sound management of health and safety. The scheme is intended to help schools identify appropriate organisations to work with by providing one easily recognisable and trusted badge for all types of learning outside the classroom providers. In 2009, the Department established the independent Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, which is charged with taking forward the Manifesto and the Quality Badge scheme. The Council has since published its action plan for 2009–11.⁴ The Council’s remit covers 10 areas: adventurous education; arts and creativity; built environment; expeditions; farming and countryside; heritage; natural environment; sacred space; school grounds; and study, sports and cultural tours. The Department has also

1 Ofsted, *Learning outside the classroom: how far should you go?*, October 2008.

2 Education and Skills Committee, *Second Report of Session 2004–05, Education Outside the Classroom*, HC 120

3 DCSF, *Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto*, 2006.

4 Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, *Forward Plan 2009–11*, March 2009.

commissioned online training and guidance related to the Manifesto, called *Out and About*. This is available to schools, youth clubs and early years settings to help them plan and implement learning outside the classroom. The Department is currently drawing up revised guidance on health and safety. It has also supported learning outside the classroom through the London Challenge initiative and at subject level.⁵

4. Despite all of this activity, questions have been raised as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the Department's approach to supporting learning outside the classroom. A number of stakeholders remain sceptical about the prospects for such learning opportunities to be embedded across schools and about the longer-term viability of the Council and Quality Badge scheme.

5. In order to assess the progress made since 2005, we held an evidence session to hear from these stakeholders and others. We took evidence from the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, the Countryside Alliance, the Field Studies Council, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and Sir Mike Tomlinson in his capacity as Chair of the National Science Learning Centre and Trustee of the Farming and Countryside Education body. We also took evidence from some of the teacher unions. Several other organisations submitted written evidence for the session, which helped us with this Report. A full list of those who gave oral evidence and who submitted written evidence is provided at the end of this Report.

⁵ For example, the New Views residential courses funded as part of the London Challenge initiative, the Action Plan for Geography, and the work of the national and regional Science Learning Centres.

2 Learning outside the classroom five years on

6. The known benefits for pupils of learning outside the classroom are many and varied. They include: improved engagement and attendance; the development of learning and thinking skills; and the strengthening of personal, social and emotional development (e.g. confidence, self-reliance, and management of risk).⁶ On that basis, we were not clear why, five years on from the Committee's Report on this topic, schools had not adopted learning outside the classroom more widely and more enthusiastically than appears to have been the case. While all learning outside the classroom can be of value, we were particularly interested in provision that takes pupils beyond their school grounds and immediate locality—school trips and residential visits—which we believe can be especially advantageous.

Pupils' access to learning outside the classroom

7. A survey of school and local authority respondents, commissioned by the Department and published in 2006, found a general perception that the amount of learning outside the classroom *within school grounds* had remained the same or even increased over the preceding five years. School trips and visits, however, were not seen to have flourished, especially day or residential visits to natural environments.⁷ Our evidence suggested that, in subsequent years, pupils' access to school trips and visits had, at best, remained static. As Andy Simpson, Head of Youth and Education at the RSPB, observed:

The pattern of [schools running school trips] is about the same [as recent years]; it is neither up nor down. ... that masks a disappointment in so far as the initiatives that have been put in place should have had some effect on raising numbers, and I am afraid that I cannot report that having taken place.⁸

8. A recent survey by the Countryside Alliance showed that, in any year, only around half of six to 15-year-olds go on a trip to the countryside with their school.⁹ This has been coupled by a more general decline in the amount of time that children spend outside. Research by Natural England has found that the likelihood of a child visiting any green space at all has halved in a generation.¹⁰ Reference was made by one of our witnesses to children having become “entombed” in their homes.¹¹ Natural England found that nearly two-thirds of children played at home indoors more than any other place.¹²

6 Ofsted, Learning outside the classroom: how far should you go?, October 2008.

7 O'Donnell, L., Education outside the classroom: an assessment of activity and practice in schools and local authorities, DCSF Research Report 803, November 2006.

8 Q 2

9 Q 3 (Robert Gray)

10 Q 1; written evidence from Natural England (LOC 04)

11 Q 46 (Anthony Thomas)

12 Written evidence from Natural England (LOC 04)

9. Anthony Thomas, Chair of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, having reviewed a series of Ofsted reports, found that even in geography, where fieldwork is a requirement, not all pupils are spending time outside the classroom. He also found that only around 10% of pupils experience learning outside the classroom, broadly defined, as part of their science lessons.¹³ Declining access to laboratory based practical work in science is a related problem. Science can be taught rigorously through learning outside the classroom. The relative absence of these opportunities, as well as practical work, undermines the whole basis of science as an experimental learning experience, and leaves pupils ill-equipped to study science at university level.¹⁴

10. Some schools and groups of pupils still have particularly poor access to learning outside the classroom. These include schools in less affluent areas, pupils with special educational needs, disabled pupils, and pupils from low-income families.¹⁵ There is evidence that some groups of pupils opt out of school trips and visits for cultural and/or financial reasons.¹⁶ School rules on which pupils can participate in school trips and visits can be counter-productive: not allowing poorly behaved pupils to participate in these opportunities may be screening out those very pupils who would benefit most.¹⁷

Integration of provision with the curriculum

11. Learning outside the classroom is strongest at the end of Key Stage 2, where school trips and visits are something of a 'rite of passage'. While such provision offers very valuable experiences for these children, timetabling trips at the end of the year limits the educational and learning opportunities that can stem from them. More generally, the extent to which school trips are built upon and exploited within a school varies enormously. Too often learning outside the classroom is an isolated experience, and is neither prepared for nor used when the pupils return to school.¹⁸ There remains no clear picture of progression in terms of learning outside the classroom from early years right the way through into secondary and post-16 provision.¹⁹

13 Q 2 (Anthony Thomas)

14 Q 27 (Sir Mike Tomlinson)

15 Q 29 (Anthony Thomas); Q61 (Dr Patrick Roach). See also, O'Donnell, L., *Education outside the classroom: an assessment of activity and practice in schools and local authorities*, DCSF Research Report 803, November 2006.

16 Q 29 (Anthony Thomas); Q 50 (Dr Mary Bousted)

17 Q 29. See also, Ofsted, *Learning outside the classroom: how far should you go?*, October 2008.

18 Q 16 (Sir Mike Tomlinson); Ofsted, *Learning outside the classroom: how far should you go?*, October 2008.

19 Q 2 (Anthony Thomas)

3 Prospects for learning outside the classroom

Funding

Central initiatives

12. In our 2005 Report we recommended that a learning outside the classroom manifesto should be introduced and that, in order to deliver real change, it should attract a similar level of funding to the Music Manifesto. The funding that the Department has in fact allocated to its learning outside the classroom initiatives was described by one witness as “derisory”.²⁰ The Music Manifesto originally received £30 million in funding; around £332 million has been allocated to music education for 2008–11, with £40 million spent on one initiative alone—*Sing Up*. Learning outside the classroom, relevant across the whole of the curriculum, has, since 2005, received £4.5 million, £2.5 million of which was to support a single residential initiative.²¹ The Council itself, responsible for taking forward the Manifesto pledges, is operating on approximately £150,000 a year, with an additional £500,000 this year for projects.²² This core funding is due to end in 2011. Our witnesses were frustrated that the Department had handed responsibility for learning outside the classroom to the Council, but had not given the Council adequate funding to do the job required.²³

13. On current funding levels, our witnesses could not see how the Quality Badge scheme could continue. In our 2005 Report we noted that the bureaucracy associated with school trips and visits was a significant deterrent to providing such opportunities. We learnt of instances where teachers were filling in 16 forms per trip.²⁴ The Quality Badge has the potential to lessen this problem: having got the Badge, a provider would be underwritten in relation to their health and safety provision being adequate. It was further suggested to us that the Quality Badge also challenges providers to raise their game in terms of the learning opportunities that they provide. Comprising a self-evaluation process and inspection, the accreditation process was felt to be robust and worthwhile for all concerned. Yet, it would appear that awareness of the Council and the Quality Badge among schools remains poor. Given the funding and effort that providers of learning outside the classroom experiences must put into gaining accreditation, this lack of awareness threatens the sustainability of the Quality Badge scheme. A total of 526 Quality Badges have been awarded so far—against the thousands that were envisaged and that would be necessary to establish the scheme as self-supporting.²⁵ Andy Simpson explained:

20 Q 8 (Robert Gray); Q 20 (Sir Mike Tomlinson)

21 Q 20 (Anthony Thomas); Ev 3, paragraph 3 (RSPB)

22 Q 20 (Anthony Thomas)

23 Q 29 (Robert Gray); see also, written evidence from the English Outdoor Council (LOC 02)

24 Education and Skills Committee, Second Report of Session 2004–05, Education Outside the Classroom, HC 120, paragraph 30.

25 Written evidence from the Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee (LOC 09)

...we're in this dreadful Catch-22 situation, where it's a lot of effort and expense on the part of the providers to get the Badge, but unless the schools are actually recognising the Badge's significance, [providers are] not going to do it. ... We have a very valuable initiative here that would make life so much easier for schools and the sadness is that they don't know about it.²⁶

The Quality Badge accreditation stands for two years, which means that the 'early adopter' organisations will need to renew their accreditation within just 11 months. Andy Simpson noted that there will be little incentive for them to do so where having the Badge has made little or no difference to their take up.²⁷

14. At present, our witnesses suggested, the NGO sector is effectively subsidising learning outside the classroom—in some cases “to the tune of millions of pounds”.²⁸ The RSPB estimates that its own learning outside the classroom operations have incurred net costs of £3 million since 2005. The RSPB has 19 centres that hold the Quality Badge; it estimates that its involvement in the Quality Badge scheme has cost £100,000 per year.²⁹

15. Learning outside the classroom is important, and the Department must provide adequate funding to achieve maximum impact. We see no reason for the very marked differential in funding levels between the Music Manifesto and the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, and request that the Department provide an explanation for the discrepancy. We believe that the allocation of a comparatively small sum would make an enormous difference to learning outside the classroom, and call on the Department to look again at the resources it has provided for the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom and the Quality Badge scheme.

School trips and visits

16. Maintained schools are not permitted to charge for any activities within the school day other than musical instrument lessons, and even then only in certain circumstances. They are allowed to request voluntary contributions and to point out to parents that trips and other activities will not take place if sufficient contributions are not received.³⁰ The NASUWT believes that this places undue pressure on parents, particularly those on low incomes.³¹ Ofsted found that, due to similar concerns, schools can be reluctant to ask parents to contribute too much too often.³² The English Outdoor Council argues that parental contributions are quite acceptable, providing that there is provision for those young people whose parents cannot afford to contribute. There are funds available at school and local authority level, including the Extended Services Disadvantage Subsidy. Deciding how to use these funds, the English Outdoor Council suggests, is largely a

26 Q 5 (Andy Simpson). See also, Q 1 (Anthony Thomas); written evidence from the Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee (LOC 09); Ofsted, Learning outside the classroom: how far should you go?, October 2008.

27 Q 5

28 Q 5 (Andy Simpson)

29 Ev 4, paragraph 4

30 Written evidence from the English Outdoor Council (LOC 02)

31 Ev 19, paragraph 12

32 Ofsted, Learning outside the classroom: how far should you go?, October 2008.

question of local priorities.³³ Some schools cover the costs of visits through the school budget or fundraising.³⁴

17. Our witnesses were particularly concerned about the access that pupils from low-income families have to school trips and visits; for these children school provision may be the only opportunity they have to experience different environments from their immediate locality. Andy Simpson commented:

...in order to have the kind of informed and engaged citizens we would all like to emerge from the school system, it is not unreasonable to identify a range of experiences—some cultural, some environmental, some adventurous—that go towards making that rounded and engaged citizen. Obviously, the role of the family in providing those opportunities is the first port of call and is pivotal, but as a society we have to ask ourselves: are these things important enough that we leave them to a random chance that if the family does not provide them, the schools may or may not provide them?³⁵

Research has shown that the higher the levels of pupils eligible for Free School Meals, the lower the number of trips and visits offered (at Key Stage 3). The same study also found that the opportunities for learning outside the classroom offered by schools serving less affluent areas tended to be narrower in scope than those run by other schools—restricted to the local area, and linked into vocational provision.³⁶

18. A notable example of provision for schools and pupils in less affluent areas has been the ‘New Views’ project, through which the Department funded residential courses as part of the London Challenge initiative. These courses offered a wide variety of residential experiences for Key Stage 3 pupils, “from exploring the glacial landscapes of Snowdonia, to canoeing in the Lake District, or from meeting the Tudors in Stratford to enjoying Eco Adventure in County Fermanagh”. The courses aimed to “balance curriculum needs with the wider benefits of a residential experience: personal and social development and team building”.³⁷ The 2009 evaluation of the project reported that the overwhelming feedback from teachers, senior managers, parents and carers and the pupils themselves was very positive; teachers observed a whole range of benefits and impacts for their pupils.³⁸ It was suggested to us that this funding model might usefully be spread across all secondary schools. The RSPB has put forward a ‘safety net’ model, based on the Free School Meals model, that would ensure that every child had access to one quality learning outside the classroom experience a year. It estimates that this would cost £40 million.³⁹

19. Learning outside the classroom must not become only the preserve of pupils from more affluent backgrounds or from the independent schools sector—all children

33 Written evidence from the English Outdoor Council (LOC 02)

34 Ofsted, *Learning outside the classroom: how far should you go?*, October 2008.

35 Q 17 (Andy Simpson)

36 Power, S. et al, *Out-of-school learning: variations in provision and participation in secondary schools*, Research Papers in Education, 2009.

37 www.newviews.org.uk

38 Tilling, S. and Amos, R., *New Views: lessons learned from the London Challenge residential courses*, June 2009.

39 Q 28 (Andy Simpson)

should have opportunities to experience environments away from their local area, and to visit museums and galleries and other sites of interest, including the natural environment of the English countryside. We call on the Department to ensure that families' ability to pay is not a deterrent to schools offering or pupils participating in school trips and visits. We commend to the Department the principle of subsidies for children from low-income families for school trips.

School frameworks and accountability

20. Some of our witnesses called for learning outside the classroom to be made an entitlement within the National Curriculum. In their view, this would be the only way to ensure that all schools took such provision seriously, and that learning outside the classroom moved from being merely an “add on” or “luxury” to sitting at the heart of the curriculum.⁴⁰

21. Learning outside the classroom is promoted in various National Curriculum-related materials from the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (e.g. *A Big Picture of the Primary Curriculum*).⁴¹ However, this is not reflected in the subject-level documentation. As Anthony Thomas remarked: “Putting it in a diagram is one thing, but actually looking at how you then help teachers to face up to it across all the subject areas ... is quite a challenge”.⁴²

22. Dr Mary Bousted, General Secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, questioned the feasibility of integrating learning outside the classroom activity within what she regarded as a highly regulated and highly assessed curriculum.⁴³ John Morgan, President of the Association of School and College Leaders, was more optimistic, suggesting that the new primary and secondary curriculum frameworks offered greater scope for creativity and for time outside the classroom.⁴⁴ These witnesses were clear that, if it is to be prioritised by schools, learning outside the classroom needs to be valued within the wider school accountability system. This was said to currently be overly focused on the written word.⁴⁵

23. We are of the view that, to ensure that learning outside the classroom is taken seriously by all schools, there should be an individual entitlement within the National Curriculum to at least one out of school visit a term.

24. The Department and the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency must ensure that the importance of such provision is indicated systematically throughout curriculum-related frameworks and materials.

40 Q 8 (Robert Gray); Ev 1 (Countryside Alliance); Ev 18 (Field Studies Council); written evidence from the English Outdoor Council (LOC 02)

41 See www.qcda.gov.uk

42 Q 15. See also, Ev 4, paragraph 7 (RSPB)

43 Q 50

44 Q 60

45 Q 50 (Dr Mary Bousted)

25. **We recommend that Ofsted include learning outside the classroom provision—as part of the curriculum—in its inspection framework, and that the Department include pupils’ access to such activities in the School Report Card.**

26. **The Department should monitor the number and range of learning outside the classroom activities provided by schools. Analysis should include a breakdown by category of school and the socio-economic characteristics of the pupils taking part.**

Guidance and leadership

Health and safety

27. Our previous Report called on the Department to work with the teacher unions and schools to ensure that teachers did not feel vulnerable to vexatious litigation.

28. Anthony Thomas was of the view that, compared to just a few years ago, there is a much greater emphasis now on encouraging a sensible exposure to risk: as long as it is effectively managed, it is viewed as an extra way of helping young people to develop and manage their safety.⁴⁶ We were also told that successful litigation by parents relating to school trips is relatively rare. Research by the Countryside Alliance found that, across 138 local authorities, between 1998 and 2008 there were 364 legal claims made as a result of children injured on school trips. Fewer than half resulted in successful payouts. The average amount of compensation paid out per local authority per year was £293.⁴⁷

29. Nevertheless, fear of litigation remains an important factor in deterring teachers from organising trips and visits. In a separate survey, the Countryside Alliance found that health and safety concerns were still the main barrier to learning outside the classroom for 76% of teachers.⁴⁸ It was suggested to us that, among school leaders, health and safety is sometimes used as an excuse rather than a reason for not offering trips or practical work.⁴⁹ The Department is yet to publish its promised revised guidance on health and safety and risk assessment.⁵⁰

30. **The delay in getting revised health and safety guidance in place is disappointing. We urge the Department to publish this guidance at the earliest opportunity. Without a further drive to both ease concerns about litigation and root out the use of health and safety as an excuse for curtailing provision, the effort and funding that has been put into promoting learning outside the classroom will be wasted.**

‘Rarely cover’

31. The National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workload, published 2003, introduced into the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document a series of

46 Q 25; see also, written evidence from the English Outdoor Council (LOC 02)

47 Q 25 (Robert Gray)

48 Q 25 (Robert Gray). See also, O’Donnell, L., Education outside the classroom: an assessment of activity and practice in Schools and local authorities, DCSF Research Report 803, November 2006.

49 Qq 27, 37 (Sir Mike Tomlinson)

50 “More help for teachers to organise school trips”, DCSF press release 2009/0209, 6 November 2009.

contractual changes designed to reduce teachers' workload. These included the stipulation that teachers should not provide classroom cover for absent colleagues on a routine basis.

32. From 2004, the amount of time a teacher could be asked to provide cover for was set at 38 hours a year. By September 2008, all schools were expected to have set a more challenging target. This would serve as a 'stepping stone' to the minimal cover levels required from September 2009—known as the 'rarely cover' provisions. Other options for covering a teacher's absence include the use of supply teachers, 'floating teachers', teaching assistants, or cover supervisors.

33. We noted the potential impact of these provisions on access to learning outside the classroom in our 2005 Report. More recently, we became concerned at the growing anecdotal evidence that the shift to 'rarely cover' would present a more marked threat in this respect.

34. Guidance on the 'rarely cover' provisions includes a section on learning outside the classroom that is designed to help schools plan effectively for these activities. The guidance states: "Learning outside the classroom is an important part of the curriculum and provision for it should be included in school calendars and timetables. Appropriate arrangements should be included in the timetable for both the staff and pupils who will be participating in learning outside the classroom and for those who are not. ...it is the absence of the person who has been timetabled to take the class or group that is the trigger for cover".⁵¹

35. Our witnesses stated that there was evidence of learning outside the classroom being cancelled due to the 'rarely cover' provisions—even where bookings had been made well in advance and cover could therefore have been arranged. The Field Studies Council has 17 centres in the UK, most of them in England. It reported that all of them have experienced a significant reduction in bookings and an increase in cancellations, which it attributed to 'rarely cover'. Robert Lucas, Chief Executive of the Field Studies Council, also noted that teachers who are very committed to learning outside the classroom were finding themselves pressured to go during holidays and at weekends in order to work around 'rarely cover'.⁵²

36. The 'rarely cover' provisions have also impacted on teachers' access to professional development during school hours. In recent oral evidence to the Committee on the teaching of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects, John Holman, Director of the National Science Learning Centre, commented:

It has always been a challenge to get head teachers to understand the importance of teachers coming out of school, but it has been harder than ever this year. That has affected our ability to operate. We do not yet know whether that is because head teachers were zealous in their interpretation of the new 'rarely cover' regulations at

51 WAMG, Guidance on 'rarely cover', September 2009, paragraphs 73–75.

52 Q 35. See also, Ev 17 (Field Studies Council)

the beginning of the year, and pragmatism will set in. We are monitoring that, but we are very worried about it.⁵³

Attendance at training run by the National Science Learning Centre is reported to be down 25% since September, enquiries about specialist courses promoted by the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics to have dropped by half.⁵⁴

37. Our witnesses were clear that these outcomes are unintended consequences of the ‘rarely cover’ provisions—and that they stem not from the principle of the provisions, but from some schools’ difficulties in taking forward much more detailed forward planning, or from the way in which some school leaders are choosing to interpret them. As the NASUWT observed:

[‘rarely cover’] will require a degree of discipline within schools to plan carefully, to seek to anticipate teaching and learning requirements and deployment priorities across the year, and to do so in greater detail than perhaps many schools have done previously.⁵⁵

As Sir Mike Tomlinson explained:

There are signs that...‘rarely cover’ is proving to be a matter of concern—not the concept of it, but the way in which it is being interpreted in some schools. In some schools, ‘rarely cover’ means “never cover”. In some cases, heads are using it as a means of...stopping staff from being out during term time.⁵⁶

38. John Morgan outlined the way in which some schools were managing to accommodate learning outside the classroom in the context of rarely cover:

...you will find schools where, for example, every second Friday, the timetable is a block timetable for the school, or you might find a school that has...larger blocks on their timetable. They don’t have 45-minute lessons or one-hour lessons; they have a morning lesson and an afternoon lesson. ... When you have that sort of system set up in your school, rarely cover ain’t a problem, because if you [need] a large group to go out and you have a large group of teachers assigned to teach them, they all go out together and the rest of the school carries on as normal.⁵⁷

39. Our witnesses suggested that better guidance and leadership were required to resolve the ‘teething problems’ evident elsewhere. Sir Mike Tomlinson regarded “efficient and sensible” guidance as “the real missing element”, and believed that the teacher unions “[had] a job to do” in communicating with school leaders to ensure that ‘rarely cover’ is

53 Oral evidence taken before the Children, Schools and Families Committee on 3 February 2010 HC (2009–10) 340, Q 54. See also, written evidence from the Royal Geographical Society (LOC 08).

54 ‘Rarely cover rules see maths and science training collapse’, TES, 19 February 2010.

55 Ev 23, paragraph 47

56 Q 4

57 Q 57

used for its original intentions, not as an excuse to cut back on opportunities for pupils or teachers.⁵⁸

40. We were impressed by the way in which some schools had found it possible to accommodate the ‘rarely cover’ provisions through, for example, the reorganisation of the school timetable. We were disappointed to learn that some school leaders seem to be interpreting the ‘rarely cover’ provisions as an excuse to prevent pupils and teachers from being out of school during the school day. We call on the Department and the teacher unions to provide stronger leadership on this matter and to assist schools in planning their provision in the context of ‘rarely cover’.

Champions for learning outside the classroom

41. In our 2005 Report we called on the Department to put in place champions of learning outside the classroom at all levels. We called for a dedicated team within the Department with responsibility for outdoor learning across curriculum areas. Our witnesses noted that champions were appointed, but that they took on the role on a part-time basis and have not had a sufficiently high profile.⁵⁹

42. It was put to us that the lack of champions, within the Department and nationally, was one explanation for the relatively limited funding to date for learning outside the classroom. The Music Manifesto has benefited from having a strong lobby and high profile supporters. It has also benefited from having a more targeted message. By contrast, as outlined earlier, the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom covers 10 diverse areas. Promoting all of them under a single umbrella is a difficult task.⁶⁰

43. Learning outside the classroom has a range of potential supporters and powerful lobby groups to draw on—the science lobby in the universities, celebrity environmentalists, and the farming lobby, to name a few. The sector requires champions who are committed to promoting the educational and social benefits of learning outside the classroom. These champions are limited in what they can achieve without the back-up of sufficient resourcing of related initiatives, learning outside the classroom being made an entitlement within the National Curriculum and being covered in school inspections.

44. We believe that each school should have an explicit policy on learning outside the classroom, covering both the educational and health and safety aspects of this provision. Schools should appoint a suitably trained learning outside the classroom coordinator to deliver the policy.

58 Qq 36–37

59 Q 20 (Anthony Thomas)

60 See Q 23 (Andy Simpson)

Teacher professional development

45. To get the most out of it, learning outside the classroom must be led by staff who are well trained in this area.⁶¹ In 2005 we asked the Department to review the place of outdoor education within initial teacher training programmes.

46. The Field Studies Council and the RSPB were frustrated with what they saw as the still inadequate coverage of learning outside the classroom within initial teacher training. All initial teacher training is shaped by the Training and Development Agency for Schools standards for Qualified Teacher Status. The relevant standard specifies that trainees should demonstrate their ability to “Establish a purposeful and safe learning environment conducive to learning and identify opportunities for learners to learn in out-of-school contexts”. The related guidance states that “trainees should be able to identify opportunities for children and young people to learn in the school grounds and in out-of-school contexts such as museums, theatres, field centres and work settings”.⁶² The Field Studies Council suggests that this standard is “weak”, and that, while some providers of initial teacher training include a two or three day residential in their training, some trainee science teachers receive no training in this area at all.⁶³ It would like to see the existing standard replaced with the following requirements: that each trainee teacher, as part of their initial training (1) attend and have an active role in a school visit; (2) plan and lead a lesson with pupils outside the classroom; (3) receive at least four hours of training in out of classroom learning.⁶⁴

47. Evidence to the Committee’s inquiry into teacher training pointed to the limited coverage that one-year initial teacher training programmes give to all aspects of teaching practice, including the fundamentals of subject knowledge and assessment.⁶⁵ As Sir Mike Tomlinson remarked: “I think it would be unfair to single out initial teacher training [to cover learning outside the classroom]. It is, of its nature, a short experience of 36 weeks.” Sir Mike called instead for “a much more coherent approach through teacher training through the first two years of teaching, to ensure that there is a gradual build-up of experience and expertise, such that teachers become well equipped to take on this work”.⁶⁶

48. Initial teacher training providers can place trainees in settings other than schools, so long as the setting enables the trainee to demonstrate his/her competence against the standards for Qualified Teacher Status and be supported to that end. The Department supports the ‘Teaching Outside the Classroom’ scheme, which encourages the development of placements for trainee teachers in settings other than schools. These can be anything from museums and galleries to city farms or environmental centres. Launched in 2008, the programme was developed by the Department and learning outside the classroom partners, the Training and Development Agency for School, Creative

61 Q 12 (Anthony Thomas)

62 TDA, QTS standards and ITT requirements guidance, 2008.

63 Ev 17 (Field Studies Council)

64 Ev 3 (Field Studies Council). See also, Ev 4, paragraph 5 (RSPB), written evidence from the Association for Science Education (LOC 11)

65 Children, Schools and Families Committee, Fourth Report of Session 2009–10, Training of Teachers, HC 275-I

66 Q 39

Partnerships, CapeUK, and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. It has a ladder of progression for the development of non-school placements:

- Integration within a provider's course structure—whereby setting staff deliver lectures, workshops and seminars to trainees.
- The enhancement model—whereby trainees complete short placements in these settings in addition to their school placements.
- The embedded model—whereby trainees complete part of their placements in one of these settings instead of only in schools; placements are formalised, quality assured and assessed, and setting staff will have been trained as mentors by partner initial teacher training providers. These placements must run for a minimum of one week and include at least half a day of direct teaching.⁶⁷

Such provision offers an important opportunity for trainees to build their confidence in relation to learning outside the classroom.⁶⁸ At present, just 42 separate providers of initial teacher training participate in this scheme. Our witnesses noted that offering placements in settings other than schools was a significant undertaking for providers of initial teacher training.⁶⁹

49. Learning outside the classroom supports pupils' learning and development. It has the potential to enrich and enliven teaching across all subjects. Teachers need to be exposed to learning outside the curriculum from early on in their career, and this should not be left to chance. We expect to see a clearer and more consistent presence for learning outside the classroom across initial teacher training and early career and ongoing professional development for teachers.

50. We welcome the 'Teaching Outside the Classroom' scheme. We call on the Department and the Training and Development Agency for Schools to monitor take up of the scheme among providers of initial teacher training and to address any barriers to their participation.

67 www.teachingoutsidetheclassroom.com

68 See Q 44 (Anthony Thomas)

69 Q 45 (Anthony Thomas)

Formal Minutes

Wednesday 17 March 2010

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Karen Buck

Paul Holmes

Mr David Chaytor

Helen Southworth

Draft Report (*Transforming Education Outside the Classroom*), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 50 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Sixth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That the following written evidence be reported to the House for publication on the Internet:

LOC 02 English Outdoor Council

LOC 04 Natural England

LOC 07 Geographical Association

LOC 08 Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

LOC 09 B. P. Ogden, Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee

LOC 10 Martin Hudson, PGL Travel Ltd

LOC 11 Association for Science Education Outdoor Science Working Group

LOC 12 Jim Hammett, Christian Camping International (UK) Ltd

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Monday 22 March at 4.00 pm

Witnesses

Wednesday 3 March 2010

Page

Robert Gray, Campaigns Director, Countryside Alliance; **Robert Lucas**, Chief Executive, Field Studies Council; **Andy Simpson**, Head of Youth and Education, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; **Anthony Thomas**, Chair, Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, and **Sir Mike Tomlinson**, Education Consultant

Ev 4

Dr Mary Bousted, General Secretary, Association of Teachers and Lecturers; **Mick Brookes**, General Secretary, National Association of Head Teachers; **Amanda Brown**, Assistant Secretary, Employment, Conditions and Rights, National Union of Teachers, **John Morgan**, President, Association of School and College Leaders, and **Dr Patrick Roach**, Assistant General Secretary, NASUWT

Ev 23

List of written evidence

1	Countryside Alliance	Ev 1
2	Field Studies Council	Ev 2: Ev 17
3	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	Ev 3
4	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)	Ev 19

List of unprinted evidence

The following written evidence has been reported to the House and has been published on the internet. Copies have been placed in the House of Commons Library, where they may be inspected by Members. Other copies are in the Parliamentary Archives (www.parliament.uk/archives), and are available to the public for inspection. Requests for inspection should be addressed to The Parliamentary Archives, Houses of Parliament, London SW1A 0PW (tel. 020 7219 3074; email archives@parliament.uk). Opening hours are from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm on Mondays to Fridays.

English Outdoor Council

Natural England

Geographical Association

Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

B. P. Ogden, Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee

Martin Hudson, PGL Travel Ltd

Association for Science Education Outdoor Science Working Group

Jim Hammett, Christian Camping International (UK) Ltd

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2009–10

First Report	School Accountability	HC 88-I and II (<i>HC 486</i>)
Second Report	Elective Home Education	HC 39-I and II (<i>HC 423</i>)
Third Report	The Work of the Committee in 2008–09	HC 187
Fourth Report	Training of Teachers	HC 275-I and II
Fifth Report	Sure Start Children's Centres	HC 130-I and -II
Sixth Report	Learning Outside the Classroom	HC 418
Seventh Report	The Early Years Single Funding Formula	HC 131

Session 2008–09

First Report	Public Expenditure	HC 46 (<i>HC 405</i>)
Second Report	The Work of the Committee in 2007–08	HC 47
Third Report	Looked-after Children	HC 111-I and II (<i>HC 787</i>)
Fourth Report	National Curriculum	HC 344-I and II (<i>HC 645</i>)
Fifth Report	Allegations Against School Staff	HC 695 (<i>HC 1000</i>)
Sixth Report	Policy and delivery: the National Curriculum tests delivery failure in 2008	HC 205 (<i>HC 1037</i>)
Seventh Report	Training of Children and Families Social Workers	HC 527-I and II (<i>HC 358 of Session 2009–10</i>)
Eighth Report	Appointment of the Children's Commissioner for England	HC 998-I and II

Session 2007–08

First Special Report	Creative Partnerships and the Curriculum: Government Response to the Eleventh Report from the Education and Skills Committee, Session 2006–07	HC 266
Second Special Report	Special Educational Needs: Assessment and Funding: Government Response to the Tenth Report from the Education and Skills Committee, Session 2006–07	HC 298
First Report	Children and Young Persons Bill [Lords]	HC 359 (<i>HC 711</i>)

24 Transforming Education Outside the Classroom

Second Report	The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Children's Plan	HC 213 (<i>HC 888</i>)
Third Report	Testing and Assessment	HC 169-I and II (<i>HC 1003</i>)
Fourth Report	The Draft Apprenticeships Bill	HC 1082 (<i>HC 259 of Session 2008–09</i>)

Oral evidence

Taken before the Children, Schools and Families Committee on Wednesday 3 March 2010

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman (Chairman)

Annette Brooke
Mr David Chaytor
Paul Holmes

Mr Andrew Pelling
Mr Graham Stuart
Mr Edward Timpson

Memorandum submitted by the Countryside Alliance

The Countryside Alliance, as part of its Rural Manifesto (www.countryside-alliance.org.uk/blogcategory/rural-manifesto), is calling for outdoor learning to be included as an entitlement within the National Curriculum so all children can access the considerable health, personal development and education benefits the countryside offers.

The body of research showing the considerable health and well-being benefits of spending time in natural green spaces is growing. Outdoor learning can help children and young people understand subjects, like maths or science, through real world examples and first hand experience. Evidence suggests spending time or learning outdoors can stabilise anger in young people, help improve concentration levels in children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and increase self-esteem. Outdoor learning therefore, has a key role to play in reducing the levels of disruption, increasing engagement in learning and raising student motivation and academic achievement. Yet outdoor learning remains an enigma for far too many children.

The reasons for this are complex but include a lack of opportunities to visit the countryside and parental fears around child safety. It is understandable that every parent wants their child to be safe, but reluctance to let them explore natural places is limiting their exposure to the countryside and reducing their hands-on knowledge of the natural world around them. For these reasons, the Countryside Alliance believes outdoor education must be included in the National Curriculum so all children can access the benefits of learning outside the classroom.

Over the past year the Countryside Alliance has undertaken extensive research on outdoor learning in schools. Through polling, omnibus research and Freedom of Information (FOI) requests we have uncovered the demand for outdoor education among children and the enthusiasm for it among teachers. Importantly, we have also revealed the low numbers of compensation claims made in relation to children injured on school trips. We hope this will play a role in easing teacher fears around health and safety and give them renewed confidence to take children out of the classroom and into the countryside.

Among the key facts uncovered by the Countryside Alliance's outdoor education campaign:

- 97% of teachers surveyed believe it is important for children to learn about the countryside within the National Curriculum.
- 89% of teachers surveyed believe that the countryside could play a greater role in cross-curricular learning in the future.
- 53% of children aged 6 to 15 years old did not go on a single visit to the countryside with their school in 2008.
- 85% of children and young people want to take part in countryside activities with their school.
- 76% of teachers surveyed said concerns about health and safety is the main barrier to outdoor education.
- Only 365 legal claims were made in relation to children injured on school visits between 1998 and 2008.
- On average just over £290 was paid out in compensation per year by each local authority.

While progress on learning outside the classroom has been made, far too many children and young people are still missing out on outdoor learning opportunities. We do not believe this is right and call on the Government to address the issues that continue to pose a barrier to all children accessing outdoor learning through school.

March 2010

Memorandum submitted by the Field Studies Council

THE PROBLEM IN A NUTSHELL

The Field Studies Council (FSC) was established in 1943 as an educational charity committed to bringing environmental understanding to all. It currently welcomes 103,000 visitors every year on courses to its national network of 17 Field Centres. These include secondary science groups from nearly 600 schools. We know that fieldwork is a great way to increase students' enthusiasm for science and help them on their way to becoming the new scientists of the future. Unfortunately, we have found that there are a number of barriers to fieldwork provision. In particular, working with partners we have specifically identified that Initial Teacher Training (ITT) is not working effectively enough to help produce sufficient numbers of science teachers with the competence, confidence and commitment to meet the modern day challenges of teaching fieldwork to the next generation of children and young people.¹ This could undermine the UK's ability to compete in STEM-related areas.

THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM—THE SKILLS GAP IN SCIENCE BASED INDUSTRIES

A recent study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported that the performance of students in science in UK secondary schools was well above the international average. This is good news because Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) industries are of strategic importance to the UK. They contribute over £68 billion a year to the economy and account for over a third of all UK exports. A skilled workforce is essential in achieving the aim of a high technology and high value-added economy and by 2014 it is expected that the UK will need to fill over three-quarters of a million extra jobs requiring highly numerate, analytical people with STEM skills. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the number of school students choosing to take physical science post-16 has fallen over the last 25 years.² Research recently published by Shell revealed that only 28% of those students electing to study science after the age of 16 intended to pursue a scientific career. The result is that six out of ten companies employing STEM-skilled staff say they are having difficulty recruiting and are turning to countries such as India and China for new staff. Unless the numbers selecting STEM subjects post-16 are retained there will be a loss of innovation and participation by UK companies in this area and Britain will struggle to compete in the global market.

THE LINK WITH SCIENCE FIELDWORK

The research described above suggests that the UK is missing out on a pool of potentially thousands of new scientists as a result of school students not pursuing STEM subjects even if they have an initial interest post-16.

Many studies have indicated a major decline in positive attitudes from students towards science. Young people at secondary school generally see less relevance in science to the real world, find it less inspiring, enjoy less practical work and feel they have less opportunity to use their imagination. Students are “turning off” science and more work is needed to ensure that students are inspired and to enable the UK to develop a rich source of skilled scientists so vital to the future of the British economy.

Whilst there is no single reason for the fall in popularity, particularly in physical sciences, it is clear that students need to be engaged in the subject to a higher level. Their enthusiasm for, and commitment towards, science needs to be raised. Hands-on practical science is known to stimulate and inspire and effectively-planned and well-taught fieldwork is a particularly powerful approach which helps to improve education standards.³ High quality “field experiences” can help to define life choices, tipping the balance in favour of post-16 science.

CURRENT LEVELS OF PROVISION OF FIELDWORK IN SCHOOLS AND ITT

The current quantity and quality of secondary science fieldwork in UK schools will not achieve the desired impacts. Fieldwork provision in science is declining in British secondary schools. More than 96% of GCSE science pupils will not experience a residential field trip, while nearly half of all A-level biology students will do no field work, with the possible exception of half a day's experience near their school.⁴ Similar trends at all key stages and extending to universities' bioscience courses appear are leading to a shortfall in people with the practical skills needed to support even biodiversity-related careers and activities. So, secondary science fieldwork provision is declining in our schools despite the very clear educational, personal development and recruitment strengths that it offers, and at a time that UK science needs to be harnessing all the support it can muster.

Any reversal in the decline in science fieldwork will have to be led by teachers. The capacity and enthusiasm to teach science in the field will need to be increased and ensuring a high status for fieldwork in Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and the standards which underpin it will be the most effective way of equipping future teachers of science with competence, confidence and commitment to take their students into the “outdoor classroom”. However, FSC and its partners believes that ITT is not working effectively

¹ ITT and the Outdoor Classroom. FSC/ASE 2007.

² Learning to Love Science: Harnessing Children's Scientific Imagination, 2008.

³ National Foundation for Educational Research, 2004.

⁴ School Science Review, 2003.

enough to help produce sufficient numbers of science teachers to meet the modern day challenges of teaching fieldwork. Recently published evidence has shown that the quantity of fieldwork training and development within science ITT is highly variable: a significant proportion of providers offer no, or very little, training in fieldwork; and levels of fieldwork training during placements in schools are often unknown.⁵ Furthermore, the Government currently holds limited evidence on how best to prepare teachers for fieldwork, has no measure of the status of fieldwork within ITT and “has made no assessment of whether the encouragement of fieldwork as a teaching method is adequately supported by teacher training courses”.⁶

THE SOLUTION

The FSC is, therefore, delighted that the Government has asked the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) to review the Qualified Teacher Status standards and is looking forward to working with the TDA to strengthen them in order to provide an incentive for fieldwork to be used as a teaching method.

In order to help in securing the future for science fieldwork we would specifically like to see the Government introduce minimum QTS standards for ITT fieldwork training and development. These will ensure that all ITT students will have fieldwork training.

Specifically, the Government must ensure that trainee teachers:

1. Attend, and have an active role, in a school visit as part of their training.
2. Plan and lead a lesson with pupils outside the classroom as part of their training.
3. Receive at least four hours of training in out of classroom learning as part of their ITT.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We believe that if the recommendations contained in the briefing were adopted by the Government it would build knowledge, skills and confidence to a level whereby newly-qualified teachers would feel more able to lead practical activities outside the classroom or laboratory, and make full use of the subject pedagogy associated with the effective teaching of science. We are committed towards contributing to the Government’s policy goals of increasing the uptake of STEM students. As a result, we would greatly appreciate your support in communicating these issues to the Government and the responsible Minister.

March 2010

Memorandum submitted by The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

1. The benefits of learning outside the classroom (LOtC) are now widely recognised and reported, not least in a number of Ofsted’s recent thematic reports⁷. In addition, the latest research from the University of Essex investigates the diverse connections between contact with nature and the positive impact on children’s health, wellbeing and life pathways.⁸

2. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has introduced a number of projects announced alongside the LOtC Manifesto’s launch in November 2009:

- setting up an independent Council for LOtC
- producing an online Out & About package of guidance for teachers
- supporting the development of a Quality Badge for LOtC
- revising LOtC health and safety guidance to teachers (although see comments below regarding the time taken to produce this and other concerns).

These items are welcomed as being beneficial to the promotion of LOtC and contributing to reducing the barriers to participation.

3. However, there have also been a number of shortcomings. The first relates to the levels of DCSF funding committed to LOtC (pertaining to the 2005 Committee’s main recommendation). While an estimated £4.5m has been provided by the DCSF since 2005, this is less than the recommended level of £30m (and significantly less than the £300m for 2008–11 that the Music Manifesto now attracts).

⁵ School Science Review 2009.

⁶ House of Commons Hansard Written Answers, 22 January 2009.

⁷ Ofsted thematic reports: ‘*Learning outside the classroom: how far should you go?*’ (October 2008);

‘*Education for sustainable development: improving schools—improving lives*’ (December 2009);

‘*Learning: creative approaches that raise standards*’ (January 2010)

⁸ University of Essex, Interdisciplinary Centre for Environment and Society (2009) ‘*Nature, Childhood, Health and Life Pathways*’

4. At the same time, organisations providing LOtC continue to bear the costs of offering such opportunities to schools, as well as additional bureaucracy associated with the LOtC Quality Badge. The RSPB estimates that its out-of-classroom learning operation has incurred net costs for the organisation of £3m since 2005 (excluding the further costs of being involved in the Quality Badge scheme—in the region of £100k per year).

5. Teacher Training for LOtC has also not received the appropriate attention from the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), nor the DCSF, that the Committee previously recommended. There are online resources available for committed teachers to develop their competence and confidence, as well as an unfunded scheme for trainee teachers to spend some time with organisations providing LOtC. However, the RSPB believes the TDA must:

- define appropriate professional requirements for the entire school workforce to ensure they are committed, confident and competent to plan, undertake, evaluate and fully integrate LOtC
- use these to revise the current Qualified Teacher Status standards. This should, in turn, also apply to Newly Qualified Teachers, as well as Advanced and Excellent Teacher Standards, and to school Support Staff roles.

6. The support given to LOtC from the teacher unions and particularly the NASUWT is to be commended. This has helped begin raise the profile of LOtC, and has specifically addressed concerns about health and safety litigation. However, the related Health and Safety for Learners Outside the Classroom (HASLOC) guidance has taken the DCSF five years to revise. In its recent consultation, significant flaws were also highlighted from a number of stakeholders (including the RSPB and Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel). It is critical that the DCSF ensures this is entirely fit for purpose prior to its publication.

7. The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency ran a specific LOtC workshop in relation to the reformed Primary Curriculum. In addition, the RSPB and many other organisations called for a higher profile of LOtC in the curriculum through the reforms consultation. Despite these factors, there is a disappointingly very low profile of specific connections to LOtC in final curriculum documentation. This is in stark contrast to the profile and emphasis given to learning in equally important areas, such as ICT.

8. The profile on the LOtC Manifesto and Quality Badge remains low within schools, and a recent survey has shown no increase in the uptake of LOtC across the country. In order to complement the considerable on-going commitment and support from providers of LOtC, it is critical that the DCSF also contributes fully to support LOtC. To do so, the DCSF should:

- provide sufficient funding (£1m) to the Council for LOtC to guarantee its continued existence in the future
- take every step possible, working with the relevant agencies, to raise the profile of all aspects of LOtC to teachers, schools, parents and across government.

March 2010

Witnesses: **Robert Gray**, Campaigns Director, Countryside Alliance, **Robert Lucas**, Chief Executive, Field Studies Council, **Andy Simpson**, Head of Youth and Education, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, **Anthony Thomas**, Chair, Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, and **Sir Mike Tomlinson**, Education Consultant, gave evidence.

Chairman: I welcome Robert Gray, Sir Mike Tomlinson, Anthony Thomas, Robert Lucas and Andy Simpson to our deliberations this morning. Sir Mike, it's quite some time since you came before the Committee as the chief inspector of schools—happy days.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: Absolutely.

Chairman: I have a declaration of interest: I know Tony Thomas and Andy Simpson very well; we're co-trustees of the John Clare Trust. Robert, I think you had better admit you've visited the John Clare Trust.

Robert Gray: I did indeed.

Chairman: Robert, that leaves you rather exposed!

Robert Lucas: It does.

Q1 Chairman: Shall we get started with a tiny introduction from each of you? We have your CVs, so we don't need to hear a long CV. We are looking at this issue because five years ago the Committee

looked at the out-of-school learning area. We took it very seriously. We thought we wrote a good report. We thought we allayed some of the concerns and worries of the teaching community and school community about the exposure to risk. We found that the safest place for your child was on a school trip; the most dangerous was with the family at home. We were pleased that the Government responded positively with a manifesto for outdoor learning and also introduced a badging system for the quality of places that children can visit. Of course, we also had the Ofsted review that, again, emphasised the importance of out-of-school learning. Since then, we've had the Natural England survey that showed the likelihood of a child visiting any green space at all has halved in a generation. For many children in this country, an out-of-school trip is their one chance of getting out of their local environment. So we're disappointed: five years later, it looks as though out-of-school learning has decreased rather than increased. This session is to

3 March 2010 Robert Gray, Robert Lucas, Andy Simpson, Anthony Thomas and Sir Mike Tomlinson

top up the last inquiry and to find out what has happened since. I'm going to riff across quickly. Robert, what is your interest in this?

Robert Gray: I am Campaigns Director for the Countryside Alliance and our interest is that we currently have a campaign on this very issue. We would like to see a revisiting of the possibility of a statutory entitlement across the curriculum, for reasons that I can go into later, because we believe that that won't solve the problem on its own. The reasons for not doing it in the past were, I believe, to do with quality and assurance and so on, but we've taken small steps with regard to the Council, so we believe there is an argument for revisiting the statutory entitlement, and I can happily go into those reasons later.

Chairman: We will drill down on the issue of statutory entitlement in a moment. Sir Mike?

Sir Mike Tomlinson: I don't think I'm quite in the same league as these gentlemen in this respect. My involvement is as a trustee of the Farming and Countryside Education body, which is very keen to get as many young people as possible out to understand where their food comes from, how it's grown, farming and so on. The picture for us at the moment is not as difficult or problematic as it is perhaps for others, but there remain some issues around enabling schools to take advantage of the opportunities. Now nearly 1,000 farms have been certified as sites for visits and the staff there trained to make the most of the visits. There are some issues, but it is not a doom-and-gloom story.

Anthony Thomas: I am Chair of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom. It is our responsibility to deliver the seven points of the manifesto. There is now an action plan, which has 14 points, as opposed to the seven of the manifesto. There has been movement forward since your last report, and a significant change in public attitude to risk. It has now become more about managing risk and not being risk averse, which is a positive move forward. There have been some indications of CPD elements, but they are web-based. The big thing has been the creation of the quality badge, which is a statement about high-quality provision among all providers. The negative issues are that schools and colleges are not necessarily aware of the manifesto or the quality badge to the degree that we would like. There is an issue about providers engaging with the quality badge, because they are not sure about the sustainability of the Council and the quality badge, and that comes back to funding. Other issues that I am sure will be touched on during the session are initial teacher training, the attitude of the TDA to out-of-classroom learning and developing competence in that area, and Ofsted and whether it reports on learning outside the classroom. There is also an issue about how we engage with the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services to convince senior managers of the benefit of learning outside the classroom. There has been some movement, but there is still a long way to go.

Robert Lucas: I am Chief Executive of the Field Studies Council. We have just over 100,000 people attending part-residential and part-day courses. My

real concerns, as well as being about learning outside the classroom issues that Tony has mentioned, are particularly about secondary scientists and not only the reduction in the number of them with experience of going outside the classroom, but the length of that experience. It has halved during the time that I have been involved in the sector, and that is significant. We are concerned about initial teaching training and teachers having the skills to support learning-outside-the-classroom visits, and access to entitlement. We have a particular issue of matters arising from rarely cover in that a lot of our residential courses are seeing the impact of what I think is an unintended consequence of the work force.

Andy Simpson: Good morning, Chairman. I am Andy Simpson. I am Head of Youth and Education for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. I was privileged to give evidence to the first inquiry on learning outside the classroom 2005. I also chair the national environment sector of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, which is a partnership of all the leading organisations, such as the National Trust, the Wildlife Trusts and many others, which between them are hosting close to 1 million visits a year. I am here primarily to report on what effect the initiatives of the 2005 inquiry have had in the real world and the problems that we face in the future.

Q2 Paul Holmes: Everybody agrees that learning outside the classroom is a good thing—ministers do, everyone does. The QCA has put out various national curriculum materials that promote learning outside the classroom. Everyone says that it is a good thing, but they say that it has been in decline steadily over the past 10 or 20 years. Is that an accurate picture?

Robert Lucas: Our science numbers on residential courses are going down. The length of the course is going down. It has more than halved during the time that I have been at the FSC. It has fallen by 7% in the past year, so the trend is still significant. It tends to be hidden in the numbers, because more often than not the number of people going outside the classroom are counted, not the quality or length of that experience. Our figures would certainly support the reduction; it is going down.

Anthony Thomas: Rob puts the emphasis on secondary education, and I totally agree with the picture that he paints. There is a slightly different trend at Key Stage 2; it is steady. Feedback from organisations, such as PGL and YHA, is that figures up to this year have been reasonably buoyant, that there has been a general increase, especially in that last year of Key Stage 2—sometimes, for interesting reasons. The increase tends to be at the end of the last year of Key Stage 2. It is a rite of passage for youngsters to go on a number of day visits or on a residential trip. There is some question over whether that is a good use of time. It is great as an experience, but in terms of education and learning, it could be used a bit more profitably. All of us have been trying to look for a clear progression. There is no clear picture of progression in terms of learning outside

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the classroom from early years right the way through into secondary and post-16. We still do not have that clarity. It is not integrated into the curriculum at the level that many of us in this room would hope it to be.

Andy Simpson: This is an informal survey that we hold throughout the Natural Environment Centre, where we all share data on visiting patterns.

Chairman: For the benefit of *Hansard*, I should say that you are waving a document in your hand.

Andy Simpson: To back up what Tony Thomas is saying, what it shows is that the pattern of visiting is about the same; it is neither up nor down. However, that masks a disappointment in so far as the initiatives that have been put in place should have had some effect on raising numbers, and I am afraid that I cannot report that having taken place.

Q3 Paul Holmes: The only subject where it is an absolute requirement is geography. Is there a really noticeable difference between the amount of geography fieldwork compared with science or history?

Anthony Thomas: A piece of work I did a few years ago was taking the old Ofsted reports and looking at the evidence for learning outside the classroom in areas of science and geography. We were saying—and you just reiterated it—that it is a statutory requirement in geography. It was not 100% in geography. There was clear evidence that young people were not getting the opportunity to go outside the classroom, especially in Key Stage 3. A lot of that was related to non-specialist teaching at Key Stage 3. In science, even when one was quite generous in interpreting learning outside the classroom—it could be a flower club, a garden club or looking after bees, which are all very laudable—we are looking at something in the order of about 10% of youngsters in science. That is the subject that helps us to understand the basic tenets of the world in terms of systems, and youngsters are only getting 10% there. There are very few schools that have an integrated approach to learning outside the classroom in science. If it was in anything, it was in biology and geology; it was not in physics or chemistry.

Robert Gray: I back that up by saying that our own surveys with organisations such as YoungPoll and the National Foundation for Educational Research show that there is a demand there. I echo what Andy was saying. We found that 53% of six to 15-year-olds did not go on a trip to the countryside with the school in 2008, and 60% of the same children felt that they did not learn enough about the countryside at school. Some 80% said that they would find lessons more motivating if they involved a trip to the countryside. At the same time, we have only 6% of teachers in our research saying that they had adequate advice and resources. Some felt that they had the advice and some felt that they had the resources, but only 6% said they had both. I echo what my colleagues on the panel have said. While no central official figures exist on the number of children who are out there taking part, it is hard

enough for the Council, let alone for the Government, to measure the outcomes, which is probably why we are where we are.

Q4 Chairman: Sir Mike, you are hiding your light under a bushel as usual. You are chairman of the National Science Centre in York, aren't you? When I visited it, I saw the value of out-of-school learning for science. The Government have put £25 million into the Wellcome Foundation and a matching £25 million into the nine regional centres. The evidence is showing that both for CPD and involving teachers, you are finding it quite difficult to get them through the doors.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: There are signs that, as someone mentioned, rarely cover is proving to be a matter of concern—not the concept of it, but the way in which it is being interpreted in some schools. In some schools, rarely cover means “never cover”. In some cases, heads are using it as a means of—more than controlling—stopping staff from being out during term time. We are seeing a drop-off. It is not that people aren't applying, but it is after their application is accepted. As you know, the whole course is funded. We pay for the cover. At the point when the head is asked to sign the agreement, they will not release the teacher, even though theoretically they have the funding to pay for the cover, if they want it. There are some issues that need unravelling. Beyond that, for example visits on the farming side, the primary sector is much more buoyant and interested in this than the secondary sector. One thing we found during the year of food and farming was that it is a cost issue. For primary schools it is often a bus cost issue. Once that resource is provided, which we did during that year, there is an enormous uptake. Nearly a million children visited a farm in that school year, but there was a considerable subsidy to help them do it. There is the interest and the desire but sometimes other factors hold them back from meeting those hopes.

Q5 Paul Holmes: The quality badge scheme was mentioned in the opening comments. Take-up of that has been a lot slower and lower than was anticipated. Why is that?

Anthony Thomas: There are 526 quality badges that have been awarded at the present time; 211 through route 1 and 310 through route 2. One of the challenges is that it is a rigorous approach to identifying quality. Teachers want that because they want to be reassured that if the badge means anything, it is that issue of quality. Andy is a chair of the natural environment sector. We have to win the minds and hearts of providers, as well as those of users. It is not just about ticking a series of boxes, but asking them to put in place what Stuart Nundy identified as best practice in an interesting piece of research done in 2002, which is to clearly identify where your visit is going to fit into the curriculum, prepare for it, deliver it with quality and follow it up. Not everyone has necessarily had that approach in the past. Learning has had to go on with providers to meet the requirements of the badge. There are issues about getting it out. A workshop was run last week

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by the natural environment sector to get the message out for the small and medium providers. As Chair of the Council, I have had a message back from providers that the users aren't asking for it. The users don't know about the manifesto, never mind about the quality badge. There is an issue for us, the DCSF, DEFRA and others who are interested in promoting learning outside the classroom with how we get the message through to schools. At the moment, it has not been effective. It is a chicken and egg situation. We also need to communicate to providers the benefit it brings to them. It is a two-way thing. It has been slow, but it is gradually building up now and there is a lot more interest. Many providers are just looking and waiting. A lot of them have been reassured about the quality of the badge. The question is its sustainability. That is a question mark I hope we will come on to in a few minutes' time.

Andy Simpson: The 2005 Committee recognised that two of the significant barriers to a school's participation were the amount of bureaucracy attached to school visits through risk assessment and things, and the fear of accidents and litigation. The badge was a welcome development because what it did at a stroke was, from the school's point of view, eliminate both those barriers to participation because, having got the badge, a provider would have been underwritten in relation to their health and safety provision being adequate. Schools could therefore bypass much of the bureaucracy that they said was a barrier. That was excellent. But the badge went even further, because it started looking at a great deal of detail and at the quality of provision. It challenged the providers to up their game. Certainly, in the higher reaches of the badge, some of the optional extras involve basically using the Ofsted self-evaluation form—a variance of that—so that providers could look to their own quality provision. That is then inspected by, in our case, an ex-Ofsted inspector. It has been very expensive and challenging. My organisation, RSPB, has spent close to £100,000 over the last year—the badge was launched in January 2009. I am afraid to say that both from my perspective and from that of the organisations in the natural environment sector, we are simply encountering a huge amount of ignorance about the badge's very existence on the part of schools. So we're in this dreadful Catch-22 situation, where it's a lot of effort and expense on the part of the providers to get the badge, but unless the schools are actually recognising the badge's significance, they're not going to do it. So we need to break out of that cycle. It's the ha'porth of tar principle. We have a very valuable initiative here that would make life so much easier for schools and the sadness is that they don't know about it. You might ask whose job it is to get out there and sell this initiative. We then come on to the funding of the council, which, sadly at the moment, precludes any major publicity drive with schools. So I would ultimately bounce this back to the DCSF and say, "You've set up something that is very worthy and will make a big difference, but we're in the ha'porth of tar situation where, but for a bit of promotion, it's likely to fail." It is even more urgent because the badge is awarded on a two-year

cycle, so you have to renew it two years after you first get it. We're rapidly heading towards a situation where, in only 11 months' time, some organisations will have to renew a badge that superficially appears to have made no difference whatsoever to their performance.

Q6 Paul Holmes: We are talking about primary and secondary, but what about the further education sector? Are they involved? Does this relate to them?

Anthony Thomas: We do know that a number of FE colleges and providers are looking at the diploma and post-16 qualification, and learning outside the classroom is an integral part of that. In terms of take-up as providers—obviously, some colleges are providing a service to others—as yet, to my knowledge, I do not think an FE centre has become a registered quality badge provider. Many of them use providers. Sparsholt college is a good example; it is working with the Hampshire country parks, so there is a relationship there. But take-up could be much greater, particularly when you're looking at employment or work experience opportunities for the post-14s.

Q7 Mr Chaytor: Could I ask Robert about your comment earlier on entitlement. What form should an entitlement take? What would it look like in detail?

Robert Gray: At the moment, there is a certain amount of entitlement regarding PE, geography and so on, but I would like to see a certain number of hours across the curriculum devoted to it.

Q8 Mr Chaytor: How many?

Robert Gray: I don't know exactly. That is for later discussion. In the final report from the Committee in 2005, Department officials opposed the idea because it did not offer assurance about the quality or relevance of the experience. Surely, now that things have moved on in a good way with the Council—we have just talked about the badges, quality and assurance—there is a case to revisit entitlement. That is one reason. On extra funding—comparing it with the Music Manifesto—if there is funding through the Council, there is now the quality and the way forward to go ahead and deliver, which would justify measures taken to create an entitlement. It would also to a certain extent solve other problems. For example, there would be greater focus if we consider things like the disproportionate fear of litigation with which we are all familiar, and the cost. When we survey teachers, the three main things are still that 76% of teachers are bothered by the fear of litigation; the next one is cost and the next one is time, which can relate to cover. All those issues, even rarely cover, will receive greater focus by moving learning outside the classroom towards the heart of the curriculum. It is currently on the fringe. In my view, if we think it is so important, then the funding has to reflect that—it is derisory compared with other sectors. Yet, it is not just all about funding; it is almost like a statement of intent. It is a state of mind. I am not adding on things for teachers. It has to be part of the curriculum that is already in place.

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They are busy enough. They are hard-pressed, imaginative people, but let us empower them and move learning outside the classroom towards the centre through the entitlement. By doing so, there will be greater focus throughout the education system, with no or very little extra work load. The benefits will be many.

Q9 Mr Chaytor: But if you think the arguments against the entitlement put forward some years ago no longer stack up because of improvements in quality, you must have a starting point in the number of hours that entitlement would include. Would it vary from secondary to primary?

Robert Gray: It may.

Q10 Mr Chaytor: I am trying to tease out realistically the ball-park figure for the number of hours annually that you would start with.

Robert Gray: To be honest, I do not have an exact figure. I am moving towards a focus on entitlement. I do not think that it will move forward. We have seen what has happened in the past five years. We can all have a long debate about exactly how many hours, but I am talking about the bigger picture and the message it sends out by having a statutory entitlement, backed up by proper funding of the Council and not burdening teachers. There is further research on the barriers that are still there—the very barriers that you all spoke about before I turned up here. I believe it sends out a powerful message, without the burden.

Anthony Thomas: As a Welshman, I take an interest in what goes on in that small country to the west. If you were asking the question, Mr Chaytor, as a Member of the Welsh Assembly, the response would be that at the foundation phase, 50% of learning in schools is learning out of the classroom. Engaging youngsters in how we look across the curriculum and use the flow from the classroom to the outdoors on a continuous basis is an interesting issue.

Q11 Mr Chaytor: How do they define “outside the classrooms”? Are you saying that children are not in the classroom in Welsh primary schools for two-and-a-half days a week?

Anthony Thomas: I have here the guidance—the documentation on Wales. They are not necessarily going on massive visits or residential, but using the school grounds and the immediate community for good mathematics, literature, geography and basically the whole of the curriculum. It becomes a natural extension. Lots of interesting initiatives around forest schools in Wales have been brought in from Scandinavia, especially Denmark. I know that the Chair has been there on a number of occasions.

Q12 Chairman: The Committee has been to forest schools. I have to say to Graham that I can remember the Committee meeting a bunch of tiny children at the edge of a forest. It was teeming with rain and they were all in their little macs and hats. It was the first time I heard the slogan, “There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing”.

Anthony Thomas: That is a lovely anecdote, Chair. The issue is that you cannot just implement this without investing in training. You have to have confident teachers, and they get that from being competent in working outside the classroom.

Q13 Chairman: There has been a culture change in Wales that isn't taking place in England. Is that what you're saying?

Anthony Thomas: That's quite right. There is a big movement within the play areas in England to take youngsters out of the classroom, and that has been a really good initiative—the whole issue of play, and the outdoors being the natural place for play. If we are looking in terms of the UK, the first statement of the manifesto says: “provide all young people with a wide range of experiences outside the classroom, including extended school activities and one or more residential visits.” What do we mean by a wide range of experiences? We have 10 sectors that are represented within the Council, so you are looking at that access, whether it is to sacred places, farms, heritage, museums and galleries, or adventure activities. It is that sort of range, and what we need—and what we have offered to do with the Council—is to come forward with some models to test with schools and colleges whether it is realistic. I don't think we have an integrated, progressive approach to learning outside the classroom.

Q14 Mr Chaytor: May I press you a little more on the issue you raised earlier, and which you have mentioned again now—the question of integration within the curriculum. Is the future for learning outside the classroom absolutely locked in to close integration within the curriculum?

Anthony Thomas: I am holding up a diagram of the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency big picture of a primary school and the big picture for Key Stage 3.

Q15 Mr Chaytor: That means nothing to me at this distance—can you describe what is in the picture?

Chairman: You will let the Committee have that diagram, won't you?

Anthony Thomas: Of course. Basically, these are relatively new documents that look at the approaches to primary and to Key Stage 3, and say quite clearly, “How do we organise learning?” There are two key elements, of the five—one is the environment and the other is learning outside the classroom. They are there, and therefore the question is, “How do teachers actually approach it?” When you look for the detail, especially in the primary curriculum document—we've had colleagues searching through this document—there are only two small references to learning outside the classroom. Putting it in a diagram is one thing, but actually looking at how you then help teachers to face up to it across all the subject areas—it is cross-curricular—is quite a challenge. I believe it can be done, but we need to invest time and energy in the process.

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Q16 Chairman: Sir Mike, you were vigorously shaking your head at one stage there, and then smiling. I was trying to find out why.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: When you were talking about integration and use, I was just reflecting on the whole issue of work experience, and the extent to which even there it is so often—far too often—seen as an isolated experience, at a point in time in a year, and is neither prepared particularly well for, or used when the students return to school. We have an issue here about summing up these experiences. They can be had, but the extent to which they are built upon and exploited within the school itself varies enormously. As a consequence the impact and value are not as high as they should be. That, of course, tends to reinforce the question: “Should we go ahead and do this again, or is it just something we do at the end of term because we’ve got time on our hands?”

Q17 Chairman: Sir Mike, you started getting animated when Tony was talking about the Welsh experience.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: It was only the 50%. I would not want to say anything against my colleagues over the border. If you look at what our best primary schools do, there is an enormous amount of time per se not in the classroom, but it is not 50 miles away either. That is the point. It is very much in the nearby playground, or whatever is available to them. It is about getting the balance. There are enormous benefits in people of all ages spending time away from their school or normal environment. It is done for a variety of reasons and quite rightly so. The 50% is interesting. I suspect if you asked many primary schools in this country, they would say that they spend quite a bit of time outside the classroom in relation to learning, but we have not quantified it.

Andy Simpson: This question actually goes beyond the education system and is about society. I think most people would agree that in order to have the kind of informed and engaged citizens we would all like to emerge from the school system, it is not unreasonable to identify a range of experiences—some cultural, some environmental, some adventurous—that go towards making that rounded and engaged citizen. Obviously, the role of the family in providing those opportunities is the first port of call and is pivotal, but as a society we have to ask ourselves: are these things important enough that we leave them to a random chance that if the family does not provide them, the schools may or may not provide them? If you are lucky and go to the right schools, you will go to the theatre and to museums and you will have environmental experiences. To me, it is something that is so important that we cannot leave it to a lottery, because those young people who fall out of that system and emerge without those experiences are predominantly less likely to become engaged with them in the future. It is a question of whether we are prepared to let this happen and whether we are going to put in place some insurance and safety nets to ensure that it does.

Robert Lucas: While we need to make sure that there is some form of progression built into this—children can’t spend their entire time in the school playing

grounds—I think it is a good starting point, but it can’t really be the end point. If learning outside the classroom is to be successful, people are inevitably going to have to have some more remote-from-home experience later on in school in order to get new experiences and broaden their horizons and understanding. FSC was fortunate to be involved in the “New views” courses, which were funded by DfES, as part of London Challenge. They were residential courses and the feedback from them was very positive in the review by the Institute of Education. If you took that funding model and spread it across all secondary schools and all state secondary pupils in England, it would cost you about the same as the Music Manifesto.

Q18 Chairman: How much is that?

Robert Lucas: £100 million a year.

Q19 Mr Chaytor: That leads nicely into my next question, which I was going to put to Anthony, about the Music Manifesto. I understand the Music Manifesto has £300 million over a three-year period, and that the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto has had £4.5 million since 2005. What are the panel’s views about that enormous discrepancy?

Chairman: I can’t take the whole panel or we will never get through the questions.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: I suspect that part of the reason is simply the extent of any public outcry from eminent individuals about the importance of a particular topic. At the end of the day, it is as simple as that I suspect.

Q20 Mr Chaytor: So music has a more powerful parents’ lobby?

Sir Mike Tomlinson: It has a more powerful lobby not only among parents, but in the music profession itself. It is very influential. I am not denying the importance of music by any stretch of the imagination, but the general funding that we are talking about is derisory for something that is so important. To go back to food and farming, it is surely not tenable that young people can emerge from education and still not know where their food comes from, and without having ever seen an animal in that sense. It’s simply unacceptable. I don’t want them to turn to careers in agriculture, but they do at least need that sort of experience and understanding. It’s woeful when you find that the only carrot they know is a straight one with no soil on it and they think it must have come out of Tesco; the concept that it is grown somewhere is quite foreign to many young people.

Anthony Thomas: The issue for the Council is that something in the order of £332 million has been allocated to music—a single subject—with £40 million spent on Sing Up, a national signing initiative, which is all exceptionally laudable. When we are talking about learning outside the classroom, cross-curriculum, got £4.5 million, of which £2.5 million was actually to support the Hamlyn Foundation residential initiative, excellent initiative that it is. But the Council is operated on something like £150,000 a year—that is its income; for about

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2.3 years, that is the core funding the Department has provided the Council. There is £500,000 this year for projects that were initially placed by the Department. The only guaranteed income that we have is £146,000 from 1 April to March 2011. The Council's auditors will not sign off our annual accounts unless they get some guarantee of future funding. I have to agree with what Sir Mike has said, and ask why. One of the comments made by this Committee in 2005 was that we needed a high-profile champion to promote learning outside the classroom nationally, and a high-profile champion in the DfES as it then was, to support learning outside the classroom and to influence other Departments about the importance of learning outside the classroom. Two champions were appointed; they did some very good work, but they were basically part-time appointees. They had to work within the constraints of the Department. They were not high profile. In some respects, the Chair of this Committee has been more high profile than anyone else in promoting the benefits of learning outside the classroom. Those are some of the issues that have led to the small, but very important amount of funding from the DCSF to the Council.

Chairman: Andy?

Andy Simpson: Mr Chaytor, you have pinpointed one of the pivotal issues facing the future of this initiative; it could easily be the straw that breaks the camel's back. A lot of out-of-classroom learning is provided by the NGO sector, but I can tell you absolutely that no one is making money from it. My organisation is subsidising its out-of-classroom learning provision to the tune of millions of pounds. In addition, we are paying for the badging system. Under the current funding regime, Council funding will run out completely in 2011, so it will be thrown back to the providers or some other funders to pick up the entire tab. We are faced with an interesting solution. I have heard many times that the NGO sector is dependent on Government funding to keep going, but in two years' time the Government will be dependent on NGO funding to keep the initiative going. One of my big pleas to the Committee is that if there is some way to secure a very modest amount of funding—we're talking hundreds of thousands, not tens of millions—for the long-term future, the NGO sector will be more than willing to pay its share, which is many multiples of what we are talking about. But please don't push it on to us absolutely and exclusively.

Q21 Mr Chaytor: Can I come back to the question of lobbying. I understand the point about the music lobby, but you have a wide potential field of powerful lobbyists to draw on; the science lobby in the universities, celebrity environmentalists—the David Attenboroughs and the David Bellamys—and the farming lobby has been one of the most powerful lobbies in the British economy for many years. Why have you not been able to draw these powerful lobbies together in a focused campaign?

Q22 Chairman: Is Kate Humble your national president now?

Andy Simpson: Yes, she is, Chair.

Chairman: I just wanted a bit more glamour and the younger generation associated with it.

Andy Simpson: I couldn't possibly comment, but I do, of course, agree.

Q23 Chairman: You have 1 million members, haven't you, Andy?

Andy Simpson: Yes, indeed. The strength of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom is also one of its weaknesses. It is easy for single champions in single areas, be it culture, environment or adventure, to promote their own thing. The Council is trying to take a horizontal view and promote all of those under an umbrella. Therefore, in essence, because most people are attached to a single activity—as my president is—it becomes difficult for that to spill over into cultural and other things.

Q24 Chairman: Last one, Tony, and then we will move on.

Anthony Thomas: One other point is that on occasion, the learning provision, within large NGOs in particular, comes with a Cinderella area. If you are a conservation organisation or a heritage organisation, sometimes the learning bit is a small entity within that. RSPB has a very high profile, but for other organisations that is not necessarily so. Some of the people you mentioned are very interested in conservation or other areas, but their involvement in the learning bit may not be as high. Having said that, the new president of the RSPB has made a personal commitment to promoting learning outside the classroom for everyone. That is a really major commitment.

Chairman: Right. Over to Annette.

Q25 Annette Brooke: Yes, I think it falls to me to refer to our risk-averse society and perhaps a suing culture. What I would really like to know is: are we making progress with teachers as far as genuine risk assessment is concerned? What work are the organisations doing with parents and carers to provide some confidence, particularly after we have perhaps had a high-profile misadventure?

Robert Gray: If I could start. From our point of view we found that despite 89% of teachers believing that the countryside or outdoor learning could play a greater role in the curriculum, 76% of teachers said that health and safety was still an issue. I know that we will come on to risk assessments. We used the Freedom of Information Act to send a request to local authorities responsible for education, and we asked them about the number of legal claims made for injuries sustained by children on school visits between 1998 and 2008. Some 138 responded, so not all, but from that 138 we found that only 364 claims were made over a 10-year period, and fewer than half—156—were successful and resulted in a payout. The average amount of compensation paid out per local authority per year was £293. I use that as an example to back up the point about the culture of fear. Others may add more on what is happening with the risk assessments. I note that in 2005, Andy

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was expressing concerns that one teacher had to fill out 16 separate forms, and I hope that that situation has changed.

Anthony Thomas: I think there are two areas here. There has been a shift in public attitude, and I think there has also been a shift in the media's attitude, as one was fuelling the other at one stage. There is a much greater emphasis now on encouraging a sensible exposure to risk. As long as it is effectively managed, it is an extra way of helping young people to develop and manage their own safety. Sir Mike, you were involved in encouraging the whole issue about safety management within science. That became an integral part of the National Curriculum—that you manage for the experiments that go on in science as a way of actually trying to prepare youngsters to face up to that. One of the papers that you have in your background documentation is from the English Outdoor Council, another of the sector groups of the council. It has just produced a booklet called, *Nothing Ventured . . . Balancing risks and benefits in the outdoors*. It is trying to look holistically at the risks and benefits in planning learning outside the classroom, and I think that is actually what is going on. The issue that you again picked out of the 2005 report—Robert has just referred to it—is the plethora of forms that colleagues have had to fill in. The quality badge is supported by the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel, or OEAP. I can quote from one of the colleagues in the east of England, from Norfolk. He said, "Where a provider holds a quality badge, teachers will no longer have to fill in any forms or have further checks." That cuts through one of the major issues around bureaucracy that was a real concern to this Committee five years ago. It is with the backing of the OEAP, and I believe that it has a conference on Thursday and Friday, and that it is going to its executive to try to get national support for that. It has been massively supportive of the badge and in trying to help us get the most important documentation.

Q26 Chairman: Who are they?

Anthony Thomas: The Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel. It's not just adventurous activity across the board. It looks at the responsibility. The other area is the daughter or son of the HASPEV documentation.¹ This is the safety documentation for schools. There is a consultation there for HASLOC² for learning outside the classroom. That consultation has just finished. We were hoping that it could have been published some time ago, but we hope that it will be in the near future and will give further guidance. We are still awaiting the Employer Guidance, which seems to be rather long in gestation. It would be a helpful document for everyone working in both state and independent

sectors about learning outside the classroom. I think we have moved forward, but there are still one or two hurdles.

Q27 Annette Brooke: Can I just press that a bit more before other people come in. Clearly, everyone is going to say that health and safety shouldn't be a barrier. But I think, as someone visiting schools in my constituency, the variation and number of trips that are taken between schools is obvious. I don't want you to play that down. If it is a barrier, maybe we should be doing more to address the issues.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: Well, I will move a little into the science area, where there is plenty of evidence that the extent and nature of practical work has been curtailed. One of those factors has been concern about health and safety rules and risk. You need to understand that that, in a sense, undermines the whole basis of science, which is an experimental learning experience. Within the national and regional science learning centres, we are providing courses that we hope will help teachers to manage that risk and continue to put in place the practical work that used to be there, but which has long since ceased to be carried out. In recent times, the Health and Safety Executive chief has come out and publicly said that in many cases, the health and safety expectations are being used as excuses rather than as reasons for not doing something. The consequence of course, if you are not doing practical work in science because of health and safety concerns, if you're going to continue with science in higher education, is that you're not going forward with the practical skills that you need. Universities are reporting this quite strongly—the students do not have the practical knowledge and skills, some of which are gained from outside the classroom, some within. There is an issue and it needs to be tackled. I will give the health and safety chief credit recently for trying to stand up and say, "Stop using it as an excuse."

Q28 Annette Brooke: Can I move on to another potential barrier, which is cost to families. I am sure that you're going to tell me that there's money here and it shouldn't be a barrier. But I think I want to know in reality, what more can we do to make these trips more accessible so a school can't back off and say, "My families can't afford this"? What can you do?

Andy Simpson: We are providing education right across the UK and I can report that there are some regional differences. For instance, it will not surprise you to learn that it's easier to get schools in prosperous West Sussex to come out than it is schools in urban and relatively deprived South Yorkshire or parts of the West Midlands. Our approach has been to promote the idea of some kind of safety net. I think it's unacceptable, if it's real, that the barrier of cost is precluding children from having access to some of these very important experiences. In fact, it's very easy to argue that those are the children who most need it, because they are the least likely to get it from their family sources. A safety net provision that, based on the free school meals model

¹ *Note by witness:* HASPEV—Health and Safety for Pupils on Environmental visits—existing DCSF health and safety guidance for schools.

² *Note by witness:* HASLOC—Health and Safety for Learners Outside the Classroom—This is the replacement DCSF health and safety guidance which has just been out for general consultation.

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would ensure that every child, for instance, had access to one quality experience a year would cost approximately £30 million.³ That's the analysis that we've done.

Robert Lucas: One thing that “New Views”, which I referred to earlier, picked out was the issue of the students who are just above whatever artificial threshold you decide is where the funding goes. Often, schools that have a very large number of people on free school meals, which is often used as an index, say that actually they do have access to different sorts of funding; it's the ones just above that threshold that don't fall into any of the categories that might be provided with subsidy. That's bound to have an impact when 90% of the funding for this sector comes from parents, NGOs and so on. It's not coming from the Department. It comes either from people's own pockets or from other people where it's often a discretionary element of what they do—they're a conservation body that does some education. We've just had an issue with a utility company that offered an excellent environmental education service, which has now just been cut. It wasn't big on its agenda; it has just drawn a line through it on the balance sheet and said, “We're not doing it any more.”

Q29 Chairman: Which utility company was that?

Robert Lucas: That's United Utilities. Probably somewhere in the region of 15,000 children who would have had either a free or a very highly subsidised experience won't have that any more, so we're in danger of the situation getting worse, not better, at the moment, which I suppose is an inevitable consequence of the recession unless we do something very active to stop that.

Anthony Thomas: I cannot necessarily give evidence of where funding might come from. What I can do is quote some research by Professor Sally Power from Cardiff University. She identified that there are winners and losers in this. Interestingly—especially thinking about my colleagues Robert Gray and Mike Tomlinson—those who go to rural schools are often some of the worst off in terms of the opportunity for visits. The smaller the school, the lower the number of visits that go on. In those schools, the proportion of youngsters taking up the opportunity to go on a visit is lower. Professor Power identifies a whole group of others who also don't get that opportunity: Traveller children, Turkish students, Sikh girls, asylum seekers and Asian girls, particularly from a Muslim background. Where the visit is residential, many of these are totally excluded. There is an interesting issue there. Another point Professor Power picks up is that some schools are using visits a bit like a carrot and stick. If you're good, you go on the visit. If your behaviour is problematic, for a whole variety of reasons, you don't go. Interestingly, that's the group, as was mentioned earlier, that would probably benefit most from a visit or a residential trip. The question is how

we overcome those issues. Some of them are cultural. Some of them are parental concerns. Some of them are definitely financial.

Robert Gray: On a broader level, I don't think it should just be the DCSF—it's not just all about the Government and funding and pots of cash everywhere. Perhaps we need to look a bit wider in terms of the Home Office and DEFRA—the Home Office if we're talking about the often quoted 50,000 problem families—in order to look at all these smaller examples and at cross-departmental funding, probably, backed up by NGO support. This is the message I am getting, having come into this more recently than some of my colleagues. Should we ask the question? In a way, have the Government abdicated responsibility for outdoor learning by handing control to the Council—albeit the Council is a major funder⁴—but not providing it with adequate funding? Politicians as champions, the Department and the Government need to send a stronger signal that learning outside the classroom is important. I have explained my view of how that can be done, but we need to decide whether the issue is important. If it is, we probably need to look wider than the current Department and to deal with things that way.

Q30 Chairman: But Robert, we have five major supermarkets that Hoover money out of communities and put little back. Has any of you approached the big supermarkets? The £100 million could be shared between the five of them—they are monopolies anyway. It would be small beer for them to put £100 million into out-of-school education for their local schools, would it not? Are they generous in this respect?

Sir Mike Tomlinson: From my perspective, some are very generous and very supportive, whether in funding development, materials and work that can go on in schools, or in supporting their local schools through funding.

Q31 Chairman: I understand that people at Asda and Tesco have a limit of £5,000 a year for any community investment. You wouldn't get much out of £5,000.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: You wouldn't get much, but that said, we have found on occasion that they are willing to put more than that into particular projects if the argument for them is sound. One thing we have to learn is how to approach these bodies for funding and how to be clear about what we want.

Q32 Chairman: Would some of them say, “We've read in the papers that a lot of schools have large reserves, so why aren't they using them?”

Sir Mike Tomlinson: I have had that one thrown back.

Q33 Chairman: Are they saying that? Is that one of the problems?

³ *Note by witness:* The actual cost for providing subsidised school trips for free school meals pupils is £40 million.

⁴ *Note by witness:* Witness meant that the Government is a major funder of the Council, not that the Council is a funder.

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Sir Mike Tomlinson: One of their arguments—it is not one that they use to say absolutely no to proposals—is that if something is considered important, to go back to Robert’s point, it will surely be funded by the Government. They say, “If it isn’t funded by the Government, they can’t see it as important, so why are you coming to us to fund it?” That’s a very reasonable question, and sometimes it’s very difficult to answer.

Chairman: Perhaps we should put a new community tax on supermarkets.

Mr Stuart: Perhaps not.

Chairman: Annette, have you finished?

Q34 Annette Brooke: Can I just ask about outdoor learning in the context of school grounds. I don’t know whether any of you has followed up whether opportunities have been taken up where we have had big investment through Building Schools for the Future.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: It has not really seriously been considered; that’s the answer.

Andy Simpson: I can tell you about an initiative the RSPB has been very much involved with. We have been running a programme called “Breathing Places”, which is a BBC-funded programme, for the last two years. It’s about a consortium of organisations releasing small environmental improvement activities to teachers in schools at the rate of one per term, and those incrementally build up into something quite significant. It is absolutely stunning that close to 12,000 schools are participating in this initiative, which is close to half the primary schools in the UK. This is a strong indication—it has been independently verified, and the BBC has produced market research—that teachers want, value and use this kind of initiative. Although organisations such as Learning through Landscapes are doing terrific work, there is still a lot more than can be done if we provide the teachers with the right tools in the right place in the right way.

Chairman: I can’t remember whether Edward or Graham was next.

Mr Timpson: It’s me next. I apologise for the cold. I could probably do with some breathing spaces myself.

Chairman: Was it breathing spaces? I thought you said “breeding”.

Andy Simpson: Breathing.

Chairman: Sorry.

Q35 Mr Timpson: Calm down, Chairman. Sir Mike touched on cover earlier, and I want to touch on it briefly. In September last year, we had the most recent changes to rarely cover provisions. In July last year, the Department said before they came in that “we do not anticipate that the rarely cover provisions will result in reduced opportunities for learning outside the classroom in the future.” I know we are only a few months into the rarely cover provisions, but what has been the impact? Do you have any direct evidence that the provisions have resulted in the cancelling of learning outside the classroom? There is lots of nodding going on.

Chairman: Robert, do you want to get us started? Sorry, I think you are being overlooked because there are two Roberts.

Robert Lucas: We have got a lot of evidence. We have 17 centres in the UK—most of them in England—and all of them are reporting a significant reduction in bookings and groups cancelling because of rarely cover. I’ll pick out one example, if I may, which is a school in a part of the country that Andy alluded to, where the economic element is not there, and it is genuinely because of rarely cover: “As you may know we are under pressure to reduce the amount of cover in school at the moment and our field trip has been under scrutiny. I am afraid we will not be able to proceed with a booking for 2010 in the present situation.” That letter is from last month and the booking was for November 2010. It is not that it couldn’t get into the school calendar or anything like that. We have had particular issues with funded courses, which tend by their nature to have quite short lead times. People have found that, despite the courses being funded, they can’t get out of school because of the barrier of rarely cover. In some cases, we have overcome that by paying for the cover, but the higher up the school you go and the smaller the groups get, the more prohibitive that becomes. If a small A-level group is being asked to provide the supply cover in school, that is a huge cost per individual for the trip. I was particularly interested by the Geographical Association’s website, which has a teachers bit called a Ning—I didn’t know what it was, but it is a bit on the website as far as I’m concerned. There is a lot of discussion on there between teachers. Remember that this is the subject where it is compulsory; where they are required to do it. If they are involved in the Geographical Association, the chances are that they are pretty fired up by geography, so these are the people who are really keen to do such things. One says: “I am frustrated by the impact rarely cover is having in terms of the number of trips going out of my school. I now have no Key Stage 3 fieldwork other than one hour in town with year 7. Student evaluations of Key Stage 3 consistently raise the No. 1 improvement to the department as more field work. We are restricting opportunities for some students who will otherwise never visit a museum, the coast, etc. What a shame.” That is a quote straight from what one teacher had put up there. Another unintended consequence of this, which I am sure was not envisaged, is that teachers who are very committed to doing this are finding themselves pressured to go in holidays and at weekends in order to work around rarely cover. From the point of view of the provider, that presents no problem whatsoever, but I’m sure that wasn’t the intention when that legislation came in.

Chairman: Tony?

Anthony Thomas: Robert said it was an unintended outcome; I think it definitely is. The idea was that you would plan your curriculum and if you had a commitment to learn outside the classroom, it would be built into that curriculum. That is presupposing that you know when it will occur in terms of your lesson plans and the progression throughout the year. That suggests a clarity in the planning. It would

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be very easy to shift all out-of-school activities into the last week of June or the first two weeks of July, which some schools do. But in terms of a good learning situation, what you ought to be doing is planning it. Without that clear commitment to planning, you get people coming up at short notice and saying, “I’d like to go here” or “I’d like to go there”. Of course, then you have problems with rarely cover. The whole issue has become more and more problematic. In my mind, it comes down to what value senior management put on learning outside the classroom. Do they believe it is valuable and believe what the research says? I have brought a pack that I can leave with you, Chairman, of all the research reports that show there is significant evidence of social and academic benefits from both day and residential learning outside the classroom. If we believe that that is important, how are we going to plan it in? Some head teachers, and I don’t know for what reasons, are saying that they use rarely cover as a cover for reducing their commitment to learning outside the classroom.

Chairman: Edward?

Mr Timpson: Sir Mike wanted to come in on that point.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: As far as science and independent CPD is concerned, rarely cover is having an impact. There is direct evidence from teachers and from the number of courses we are having to cancel in some cases, even though the teachers have signed up, because ultimately they are told no. It is having an impact. Like my colleague, I believe that it is an unintended consequence, but there are some head teachers whom I have met who have taken rarely cover and converted it into “never cover”. There are heads who will say, “There will never be any teacher out of my school during term time.”

Q36 Chairman: Sir Mike, you seem to be mincing your words here. Who are you blaming for this? Are the Secretary of State, the Government and the Department at fault, or a scheming and conspiring group of teacher unions, or is it poorly administered by heads? There has to be some responsibility here.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: I don’t think anyone would disagree with the principle behind it. For me, the real missing element is good guidance that is efficient and sensible. I know that the Department is concerned about this, because it is currently asking people to let them know when this is happening.

Q37 Chairman: There seems to be a lot of guidance, Sir Mike, but not much leadership.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: Guidance is one thing. The teacher associations have a job to do here to talk to their members at various levels, not least at the senior level, because I do think that it is being used as an excuse to stop things, rather than for its original intention, which was quite defensible.

Chairman: Anybody else?

Robert Gray: I have just one point to add to that. I think that it wouldn’t be used as an excuse—I am in danger of sounding like a parrot with the entitlement—and if it was, as Tony said, integrated

into the curriculum, it would be less likely that this would slip by the wayside, although I don’t think that is intentional. The only other thing I will note is that the Government obviously recognise the value of outdoor learning in the curriculum and has stated in School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions 2009 that, “appropriate arrangements should be included in the timetable for both the staff and pupils who will participate in learning outside the classroom and for those who are not.” I do not think that any scheming is going on here, but the fact that learning outside the classroom is still on the fringe, rather than at the heart of the curriculum, has led to these unfortunate circumstances.

Chairman: We have some very distinguished visitors from the IPU with us today, so we had better all be on our best behaviour, in terms of our questioning and answering.

Mr Stuart: How appropriate that you should come to me, Chairman.

Chairman: The star of the Committee.

Q38 Mr Stuart: Can I ask the panel about teacher training. Obviously, we have heard an amount of evidence on that subject. Perhaps we can start by asking how PGCE students access the Field Studies Council’s training courses on learning outside the classroom. Do they have to show their own interest and initiative to get on one?

Robert Lucas: There are two routes. One is that we are approached by the institutions where they are training. They approach us and say, “Can we come on one of your courses, please?” We would then set up a dedicated course for them. We also run some open-access courses, which means that anyone who is interested but who’s department or institution is not that interested overall can sign up individually on those courses, and they are heavily subsidised, so that there is no financial barrier. They can access that through the website, so there is an open form of encouragement for them to do that. We have up to 500 PGCE students coming through each year—a mix of geography and biology.

Q39 Mr Stuart: Can I ask Sir Mike to comment on ensuring that initial teacher training, and possibly CPD, opens teachers’ minds to the practices, giving them the skills and confidence to take children out of the classroom? Is that happening at the moment?

Sir Mike Tomlinson: To a degree, yes it is, as has already been said, but it is not an absolute requirement. I think it would be unfair to single out initial teacher training. It is, of its nature, a short experience of 36 weeks. What is needed is a much more coherent approach through teacher training through the first two years of teaching, to ensure that there is a gradual build-up of experience and expertise, such that teachers become well equipped to take on this work. I would not favour trying to put yet more into initial teacher training, but I would want a much more coherent approach across initial teacher training and the probationary year and just beyond, such that we saw that as seamless and we helped students and then newly qualified teachers to gain the experience and expertise. Often, unless you

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gain it on the job and understand how it fits into the job, it doesn't have the same impact that we would wish it to. I would broaden it, not just keep it to initial teacher training.

Q40 Mr Stuart: So you disagree, then, with the Field Studies Council, which says that a significant minority of secondary science teacher training providers offer no training in fieldwork and it would like to see the existing standard replaced by each trainee teacher, as part of their initial training, attending and having an active role in a school visit and planning and leading a lesson with pupils outside the classroom.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: It goes back to the point that, in terms of science, it's mainly, but not exclusively, biology that's involved in this, and, as I say, there is no statutory ingredient of teacher training that covers this requirement. Having said that, most PGCE biology courses will touch upon this. I just think it's wrong to think that it all has to happen in initial teacher training. It's too short a period and a lot has to be done. I would much prefer to see a more coherently planned period of initial teacher training and the first two years of actual employment in teaching to be the continuation of their professional training. This is an area that would fit well into that early part of training as a newly qualified teacher.

Chairman: Tony?

Anthony Thomas: The key word that Sir Mike's focused on there is "coherence". An approach to ITT is starting to carry forward through into newly qualified teachers to advanced and excellent teacher standards, so that we can see that progression. There is a requirement at present in initial teacher training that you have to undertake a risk assessment in terms of actually how do you manage a group outdoors. Unless you've actually experienced, as you did in Denmark, Mr Stuart, going out with youngsters, it's no use doing a classroom-based activity that tries to predict what are the hazards and what's the risk—it's actually being there and doing it. If I recall correctly, from work undertaken from the FSC in the past, they came up with the ASE on the Malham Tarn protocol, which was a limited period: we're talking about six hours. You're quite right, Sir Mike, in terms of saying ITT is a small window, but six hours to have the opportunity to look at where the visit might fit into a curriculum, delivery of that visit and then some form of review and evaluation afterwards to be included in the curriculum. Six hours may be a bit to ask for, but it would be a much more effective use of time than having one hour, which was just risk management. The point that Sir Mike makes is that it's really getting in with the TDA and the TDA having a review of professional requirements of a work force. We welcome that. The chief executive of the Council and myself recently met Jacquie Nunn of the TDA, who was supportive of some of the things that we were saying and has the willingness to listen to some of the suggestions about training for learning outside the classroom and support dissemination of research and good practice on the TDA website. We

are moving in the right direction, but that is the coherent approach progressing from ITT right the way up to excellent teacher standards.

Mr Stuart: Robert?

Robert Lucas: First of all, the document that Tony is referring to is *Standards for the future*, which was produced by FSC and ASE that mentioned the six hours as a starting point. It isn't the end point. We have, potentially, a real mismatch at the moment, because we have just had—and we welcome it—the inclusion of, specifically, field work in GCSE science, which is now there as a requirement, or will be from 2011. At the moment, one wonders about the quality of how that will be delivered out in the field when there is now an increasing number of teachers who are becoming science teachers but who will have never done field work. They will not have done it in their school and they will never have done it at university, because they will have done genetics or microbiology or something, whereas that contrasts with geography, for which most people have at least still done some and have a kind of feeling about it. That really stands out when teachers ring us: geography teachers ring and discuss things; the science teachers often think, "I need to do some field work," but they don't even know the questions to ask.

Q41 Chairman: That's a scandalous situation, isn't it?

Robert Lucas: Yes.

Chairman: Utterly scandalous. Andy?

Andy Simpson: I am sure we all agree that there is some fantastic practice in out-of-classroom learning going on out there. It is inextricably linked to two things: the culture of the schools in which it is taking place and their outward-looking nature; and, secondly, the enthusiasm of individual teachers, who are the people who make things happen. We see this all the time. The problem is that unless there is some provision to expose teachers to such activity early on in their career, and they find themselves in their first teaching post in a school in which that culture is not evident and not a priority, there is a strong probability that that teacher is lost, substantially, to out-of-classroom learning for the rest of their career. It is something that is kind of left to chance.

Q42 Mr Stuart: Sir Mike is saying, "Don't load it on poor old initial teacher training," which is short and already overloaded and overprescribed. On the other hand, you are suggesting that, if you don't get it in earlier, they will just turn up in the schools. In the ideal world and in the great schools, sure, you will quickly develop that confidence and skill. But what if you go to a school where they don't have that? Instead of a new teacher arriving with a skill set to bring into the school, he is relying on the school to provide it, and we know that it doesn't have that in too many cases.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: Let me hear from Andy first.

Mr Stuart: I want Andy to agree with me that you are wrong first, Sir Mike, then we'll move on to you.

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Andy Simpson: I'm not suggesting that it is exclusively initial teacher education where the problem occurs. I think the linkage of this to qualified teacher status—which is where you are the finished article and not the probationer, as it used to be—is the way to go. It's all about status and priority. At the moment, if we continue to view this as an ancillary, luxury and almost extra-curricular activity, the situation won't change.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: I just wanted to remind you that out of 36 weeks, 24 are spent in the school. If the teacher is in a school that has no interest in this work, it impacts straightaway.

Q43 Mr Stuart: I defer to your expertise, Sir Mike. I was saying that, if it was a requirement, you would have all these trainee teachers stimulating in order to meet their requirements as well as those of the children. The schools could be stimulated into actually leading some extra outside-classroom activities. Surely, that would be good for teachers, pupils and schools?

Sir Mike Tomlinson: Yes, what you describe is good. What I worry about is consistently adding to the initial teacher training requirement—

Mr Stuart: Which I understand.

Sir Mike Tomlinson: Which at the end of the time simply results in many things being done rather cursorily, because the time isn't there. In this particular instance, it is a matter of time. These are things that cannot be done quickly.

Q44 Mr Stuart: It just seems slightly odd because the whole point is that going out of the classroom does not preclude doing other things. It is not a maths class that stops you doing English. The point is that going out of the classroom allows you to do all sorts of other things that you might need to do. Therefore, it shouldn't be displacing other activities—not another prescription, displacing things that are already there, but something that actually enhances, if we all believe in it. I suppose that seemed slightly discrepant to me—your saying that you didn't want to load it in there. May I ask about the extent to which initial teacher training providers are making use of settings other than schools for the purpose of training placements? That is a new initiative, which should surely be welcome.

Anthony Thomas: There is the initiative called Teaching Outside the Classroom, which is led by Creative Partnerships, launched in March 2008. It brings together ITT providers with non-school settings in England and Wales: 130 settings, including museums, galleries, theatres, football clubs and even a cemetery, where you can go for work experience. We have groups, such as the University of Sussex, Queen Mary's London, the Universities of York, Leeds and Ripon and so on, that are involved in these initiatives. You have post-graduates being placed in non-school settings to broaden their base. The Council is very supportive of that. We work very closely with teaching outside the classroom and we are trying to ensure that all the providers who are part of a council are aware of the

opportunity to help young teachers get some of that experience, which is just outside part of that 34 weeks, but in a slightly different context.

Q45 Mr Stuart: What is inhibiting that from growing more quickly and being better utilised?

Anthony Thomas: Part of it has been a scheme actually to do it; part of it has been a slight reluctance. If you are a provider, you have to be prepared to take this on. As we were saying earlier, you can have work experience that turns you off the work itself. You have to be prepared to mentor and provide a structured experience for those people doing it. There is a commitment now from providers about the future. We've got to look to ourselves; we've got to encourage greater awareness about the opportunities that learning outside the classroom offers, and these different contexts allow an exemplification of that.

Q46 Chairman: We're coming to the end of our time. The Committee is getting a strong feeling that everyone has a warm feeling towards out-of-school learning but there is not enough leadership or resources to change the culture that we need to change. Give us quickly one thing you want the Committee to say in order to galvanise the process. You have convinced the Committee of the urgent need for change. We have two minutes to riff across. We'll start with you, Andy.

Andy Simpson: Promote the initiatives that are there, that are valuable, that will make a difference—specifically the quality badge—and support the Learning Outside the Classroom Council in a sustainable way, so that we really have a partnership with DCSF, not a dependency.

Robert Lucas: Think of it as a mainstream activity, so that it does not get deflected every time another new initiative comes up.

Anthony Thomas: I concur with what my two colleagues have said. Without core funding, the Council will not exist post-April 2011.

Chairman: As I said at the beginning, this is in the light of the fact that in one generation the number of children going out to any green space in our country has halved.

Anthony Thomas: Absolutely. If you look at the work done by Malone and the Countryside Commission—now merged with Natural England—you are seeing a decline in youngsters using places like parks and playgrounds. We are becoming entombed within our homes.

Chairman: Entombed?

Anthony Thomas: Part of it is for security. Parents are worried about youngsters. Part of it is about the inclination of youngsters to be engaged.

Chairman: I like that. That can be in the report, "entombed". Sir Mike?

Sir Mike Tomlinson: I think it's all been covered. I would argue for this being an integral part of the curriculum. I would then expect, if that is the case, that it is properly funded.

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Chairman: Excellent. Robert, the last word.

Robert Gray: Sir Mike took the words right out of my mouth.

Chairman: He always does that to me, too.

Robert Gray: I couldn't agree more. Yes—an integral part of the curriculum, properly funded, moving from the fringe to the centre. Then you will get the focus on every single subject we have spoken about today. I note the 2005 report says it should be

“more than warm words”. You have mentioned that we have all got warm feelings, but I think we need to do more along the lines of what Sir Mike says.

Chairman: Gentlemen, you are all gentlemen this morning, and even with that large drawback—we could have had Kate Humble here—we are very grateful for the diversity of your views and your profound experience. We have learned a lot. Thank you very much.

Supplementary memorandum submitted by the Field Studies Council

PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

The Field Studies Council (FSC) was delighted to have the opportunity to give oral evidence to the Children, Schools and Families Committee on 3 March 2010. Due to the time constraints of the session we felt that there were a number of issues which we were unable to fully bring to members attention. We have, therefore, pulled together this short document to expand on our oral evidence and would be most grateful if members of the Committee would take a moment to read its contents.

THE ROLE OF INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

In recent years the FSC has witnessed a significant decline in the number of young people studying science visiting our residential centres across the country. This decline has accelerated in recent years, including a 7% loss between 2008 and 2009. Our experience has shown that any reversal in the decline in fieldwork will have to be led by teachers. Teachers are the gatekeepers of students getting out of the classroom and the commitment of teachers and school managers to outdoor learning is vital. Teachers must have the knowledge, skills and experience to deliver effective fieldwork, and more must be done to ensure this. The capacity and enthusiasm to teach science in the field will need to be increased and ensuring a high status for fieldwork in Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and the standards which underpin it will be the most effective way of equipping future teachers of science with the skills to take their students into the “outdoor classroom”. However, the FSC has experienced that the UK is not currently producing sufficient numbers of science teachers with the competence, confidence and commitment to meet the modern day challenges of teaching fieldwork to the next generation of children and young people.

Working with the Association for Science Education (ASE) the FSC co-authored *Initial Teacher Education and the Outdoor Classroom: Standards for the Future*. The report was the result of a two day seminar held in 2007 with a number of stakeholders including leading ITT providers, Ofsted, TDA, teachers and trainees. In the report it was highlighted that the quantity and quality of fieldwork training and development within ITT is highly variable and is weakened generally by the absence of any agreement of what constitutes the minimum fieldwork training and development requirement needed to train secondary science teachers. Currently under QTS 30 trainee teachers are asked only to recognise opportunities for out of classroom learning. This is a weak standard but even this is not being reached by some ITT providers. Evidence published in ASE's secondary science journal in 2009 shows that some trainee science teachers are getting no training in this area at all. Lack of time in the ITT curriculum is not a barrier—some providers include a full two to three day residential in their training. The absence of adequate training is due to insufficient importance given to this area.

The FSC and its partners strongly recommend that there is at least a requirement within teacher training for trainees to plan, organise, take part in or lead outdoor learning activities.

The FSC is delighted that the Government has asked the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) to review the Qualified Teacher Status standards later this year and is looking forward to working with the TDA to strengthen them in it in order to provide an incentive for fieldwork to be used as a teaching method. *In order to help in securing the future for science fieldwork we would specifically like to see the Government introduce minimum QTS standards for ITT fieldwork training and development. These will ensure that all ITT students will have fieldwork training.*

Specifically, the FSC feels the Government must ensure that trainee teachers:

1. *Attend, and have an active role, in a school visit as part of their training.*
2. *Plan and lead a lesson with pupils outside the classroom as part of their training.*
3. *Receive at least four hours of training in out of classroom learning as part of their ITT.*

IMPACT OF THE “RARELY COVER” GUIDANCE

In line with other witnesses, the FSC has found that the “rarely cover” guidance has had a significant impact and all of the FSC residential centres in England are reporting a reduction in the number of students attending because teaching cover can’t be arranged for visits and courses.

For example, a teacher recently cancelled a booking at one of our centres because staff were “*under pressure to reduce the amount of cover in school at the moment*”.

The problem is best summarised in a nutshell by the following account from one of our visiting teachers:

“There are some delays in getting the approval from finance to launch the trip to the students. We have just brought in a no-cover policy which means we have to get supply in to teach any lessons we need covering as a result of trips. This pushes the cost of the planned trip up and the office is not happy yet with our costs. I am pushing for this trip to be launched and have a meeting on Wednesday to try to agree the costs with the head teacher. I cannot apologise enough—I thought this would be sorted now but I guess politics is getting in the way”.

To overcome the obstacles presented by “rarely cover” we are aware that teachers these days have to:

- Make sure that the curriculum links are strong.
- Have access to a fund which pays for supply cover.
- Have the confidence and self-assurance to push the case.
- Be politically canny when “negotiating” with colleagues in the staffroom.

The FSC’s evidence is strongly backed by the personal accounts from staff in organisations such as Geographical Association, Institute of Education and National Science Learning Centres, all of whom have said that recruitment to CPD and training has been adversely affected by the “rarely cover” rule.

We support the view expressed by Anthony Thomas, Chairman of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, that young people are becoming “entombed” indoors at least partly due to the “rarely cover” guidance.

We would, therefore, like the Committee to recommend that the Government urgently review the National Agreement on “Raising Standards and Tackling Workload” and consider the impact “rarely cover” guidance is having on the number of young people undertaking learning outside the classroom.

ENTITLEMENT OF FIELDWORK IN THE CURRICULUM

The FSC supports the inclusion of fieldwork in the curriculum as an entitlement to ensure that all pupils get the opportunity to experience the outside world. Currently the FSC has found that many young people do not have an opportunity to take part in a residential learning experience. As you may recall, over the past five years the FSC has provided residential experiences to over 38,000 Key Stage 3 and 4 students from some of the most disadvantaged schools in London, the Black Country and Greater Manchester through the DCSF London Challenge and City Challenge projects. We found that up to 80% of young people in some of our City Challenge groups had never taken part in a residential experience (a pattern which is also seen amongst their parents).

A lack of fieldwork entitlement has led to a worrying decline in fieldwork and this has particularly affected certain groups of young people. Research we have published with the Institute of Education in *New Views: Lessons learned from the London Challenge residential courses* found that there was a generally overlooked “middle group” who came from borderline families who often just failed to qualify for hardship support, but also lacked the means to pay for residential visits themselves. This is a group which includes many young people who have very high potential which remains unfulfilled because they are not given the opportunity to take part in a learning experience from which they could grow and develop further. The FSC is concerned that currently a whole generation of these young people are not experiencing outdoor learning through no fault of their own.

In addition, a lack of entitlement has reduced opportunities for those from the most challenging circumstances. This is particularly frustrating because our experience from the London Challenge has shown that teachers are frequently surprised by the abilities and interest shown by “poorly performing” students when in the outdoors, and by the extent to which Outdoor Learning has awakened their potential. The FSC thinks that allowing the current situation to continue is a high risk scenario which could undermine the provision of outdoor learning; we should be aiming for making the best provision available and not reducing everything to the lowest entitlement. At a recent Parliamentary event Professor Justin Dillon, Professor of Science and Environmental Education from King’s College London, described the inequity of access in fieldwork as a “national disgrace” and we agree that urgent action needs to be taken to arrest the decline.

By introducing a fieldwork entitlement every young person would have an opportunity to experience direct contact with the natural world. An entitlement would require some schools to balance their priorities in different ways and as Robert Gray from the Countryside Alliance said, an entitlement would “move outdoor learning from the peripheral to the centre”.

The FSC would be flexible on the exact wording of the entitlement but would as a starting point suggest that the entitlement contains an opportunity for all young people to experience a learning outside the classroom visit during their school years. We would also recommend that the Government ringfence a source of funding to support those young people who would not otherwise be able to afford the experience.

FUNDING OF THE COUNCIL FOR LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM AND COMPARISONS WITH THE MUSIC MANIFESTO

During the evidence session it was identified that there is a major shortfall in DCSF funding for the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom. The Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto has received just £4.5 million since 2005. We feel the Government has neglected to make a significant investment to encourage learning outside the classroom. This is especially the case when you consider that since 2007 the Government has made a major investment in the Music Manifesto with a £332 million funding package to implement the manifesto over three years. For £100 million a year the FSC has calculated (based on our London Challenge residential course) that all secondary pupils in state schools in England could have at least one residential experience with the degree of assistance being determined by need. This £100 million figure could go down significantly if the compulsion for fieldwork in the curriculum goes up.

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom is currently operating on around £150,000 a year and this funding is set to end in March 2011. The FSC and other organisations are concerned that once funding ends the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom will cease to exist and the single voice for learning outside the classroom providers will be lost.

We would like the Committee to recommend that the DCSF gives extra investment to the Council to ensure that the commitments made in the Manifesto for Learning Outside the Classroom continue to be taken forward.

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM QUALITY BADGE

The FSC administers the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge for the natural environment sector and we agree that the badge serves an important purpose and will drive up standards of outdoor learning providers in the future. It is fair to say that the take up of the badge has not been as successful as was hoped. The major barrier we have found is that there is a lack of awareness in schools. We accept that the current set-up is a catch 22 situation whereby providers are spending a lot of time and money on getting the badge but due to lack of awareness schools are not recognising the badge.

We would like the Committee to recommend that the DCSF make a commitment to invest in an effective practitioner-led PR campaign to increase the awareness of the Fieldwork Quality Badge in schools.

March 2010

Memorandum submitted by the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)

1. NASUWT is pleased to have the opportunity to submit evidence to the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee on learning outside the classroom (LOtC).
2. This submission draws upon the extensive knowledge the Union has gained from feedback from members undertaking LOtC activities and from the representational casework in which the Union has been involved.
3. The Union's submission highlights the importance of LOtC as part of a school's planned teaching and learning programme and the need for LOtC to be inclusive and sustainable in its delivery.
4. The NASUWT is the largest union representing teachers and headteachers in the UK, with over 270,000 serving teacher and school leader members.
5. The Union's submission recognises the open-ended interest of the Select Committee on this topic, following the previous report of the Education and Skills Select Committee into *Education Outside the Classroom* published in 2005. The NASUWT also notes the Select Committee's particular interest in exploring the impact of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) provisions in respect of "rarely cover" on schools' ability to organise LOtC activities.

THE NASUWT POSITION

6. The NASUWT recognises the value of LOtC as part of a planned programme of educational and curriculum entitlement for all pupils in schools. The Union recognises the wide range of opportunities for LOtC and that the majority of these activities take place within the perimeter and security of the school.
7. The NASUWT welcomed Ofsted's 2008 evaluation of LOtC which provided a strong case for schools' engagement in LOtC as part of a planned and inclusive programme of curriculum provision for all pupils.

8. The NASUWT has been very concerned to address the concerns of teachers and school leaders about planning and organising off-site LOfC activities and to reduce the burdens and address the concerns of schools undertaking these activities.

9. The Union has and continues to work closely with the DCSF to promote good practice by schools in the planning and organisation of LOfC activities. The NASUWT is a signatory to the LOfC Manifesto and was actively involved in supporting the establishment of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, the development of the LOfC “Out and About” package, and the establishment of the Quality Badge scheme for external providers of LOfC.

10. The NASUWT advises its members to carefully consider their involvement in off-site LOfC and to ensure that the relevant advice and guidance issued by the DCSF and the local authority are followed closely.

CURRICULUM ENTITLEMENT AND OPPORTUNITY

11. The NASUWT believes that the most effective LOfC activity is that which is appropriately planned and organised as part of a school’s curriculum. As such, all pupils should be entitled to and be afforded equality of access to the full range of the school’s curriculum offer, including LOfC.

12. The DCSF advises that schools should consider the educational value of LOfC activity—a view which is also supported by Ofsted. Schools should ensure that their LOfC curriculum offer is accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs, disabilities or other needs.

13. Where LOfC is appropriately organised as part of the school’s curriculum, schools are not permitted to charge a fee for pupils to participate in LOfC, although it is clear that many schools seek voluntary contributions from parents/carers.

14. Parents are often advised that their contribution is voluntary but can be told in the information about the visit that failure to contribute may mean that it cannot proceed. The NASUWT believes that this places unacceptable pressure on parents, particularly those on low incomes.

15. Ofsted’s 2008 report on LOfC raised similar concerns on this issue and made a compelling case for schools to address the impact of their LOfC activity as part of the delivery of an inclusive curriculum offer for every pupil:

“One school... had a policy that all visits should be provided free because they were seen as an essential part of the curriculum and given equal status with other aspects of its provision. It met the costs from its budget or through fund-raising. Most of the headteachers interviewed, however, had not given sufficient thought to how to finance learning outside the classroom other than through parental contributions. They had not considered whether devoting a part of their budget to visits might not have as much impact on their pupils’ learning as spending the same amount, for example, on employing a new teaching assistant or purchasing more computers. A few headteachers had not appreciated that such choices were available to them. The fact that so few of the institutions visited conducted a detailed evaluation of learning outside the classroom meant that they were not able to compare the effectiveness, or the value for money, of different types of provision and expenditure.” (Ofsted, 2008: 22)

16. Regrettably, a result of the practice of seeking voluntary contributions is often that some pupils may be unable or unwilling to participate in LOfC, resulting in the need to identify other additional members of staff to supervise non-participating pupils in the absence of the assigned teacher (ie the teacher who is participating in the educational visit).

17. The NASUWT believes that a strong case can be made for the review of the charging policies of schools in relation to LOfC activities. Indeed, schools should recognise the importance of being proactive on this issue, and as part of their arrangements for delivering a sustainable and effective programme of LOfC activities in the longer term.

RISK MANAGEMENT

18. The NASUWT recognises that no activity is ever risk free. The Union does believe that in ensuring access to high quality educational experiences for children and young people, schools must take reasonable steps to manage risk and to ensure that staff who lead or support the curriculum are trained and deployed appropriately.

19. The NASUWT welcomes the establishment of the LOfC Quality Badge in enabling schools to plan their provision of LOfC with greater confidence. It remains important that these quality assurance arrangements are robust, are supportive to schools, and enable schools to release the capacity of teachers and headteachers to focus on the teaching and learning objectives associated with LOfC activity. This is especially important in the context of risk management.

INDEMNIFICATION

20. The NASUWT has been concerned about the impact of an increasingly litigious environment on the ability of schools to organise LOTC, especially where schools believe that they may be vulnerable to compensation claims.

21. Whilst claims against schools are not confined to incidents which occur on LOTC, there is an increased risk of compensation claims arising in the case of activities that take place off-site.

22. Furthermore, teachers have been vulnerable as a result of delays in the conduct of investigations where problems have arisen or where they have individually been cited in legal action that has been instigated by parents or carers. In some instances, employers have been unwilling to provide proper representation or support for teachers, further exacerbating teachers' professional and personal liability concerns. The Union's casework has revealed that employers will often decline to support individual teachers on grounds of perceived "conflict of interest" between the employee and the pupil.

23. The NASUWT has been committed to working with the Government to provide appropriate safeguards which protect teachers in these circumstances, and in the updating of the DCSF guidance on the Health and Safety of Learners Outside the Classroom (HASLOC) which is currently the subject of a DCSF consultation.

SCHOOL WORKFORCE REFORM

24. The National Agreement on "*Raising Standards and Tackling Workload*" signed in January 2003 recognised the central importance of the school workforce in raising educational standards and confirmed the need for all schools to apply sustainable practices predicated on the most appropriate deployment of their finite resources and personnel.

25. The National Agreement presaged the introduction of a number of important contractual changes for teachers and headteachers, designed to support schools in delivering high quality teaching and learning for all pupils, building the education team around the child, and ensuring that the work of teachers and headteachers is manageable and focused appropriately on teaching and leading and managing teaching and learning.

26. Since 2003, remodelling of the school workforce has brought about a major expansion in the number and range of support staff working in schools. Support staff have enabled the release of teachers and headteachers from a range of tasks which do not require their professional knowledge, qualifications or skills, whilst also providing additional support for teaching and learning in the classroom.

27. The National Agreement has resulted in a series of statutory contractual provisions now enshrined in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) which enable teachers and headteachers to work more effectively to raise standards. The provisions include:

- an entitlement to a minimum 10% of timetabled teaching time for planning, preparation and assessment;
- time to carry out leadership and management responsibilities;
- an entitlement for headteachers to dedicated headship time;
- teachers and headteachers no longer routinely required to undertake administrative or clerical tasks;
- teachers and headteachers not required to undertake examination invigilation;
- a requirement that schools have regard to teachers' work life balance; and
- a requirement that teachers and headteachers may cover only rarely.

28. Freeing teachers from tasks which do not require their qualifications or skills requires that schools remodel, including by establishing new and enhanced roles for support staff (eg Higher Level Teaching Assistants, Teaching Assistants, School Business Managers and cover supervisors). Some schools have established specialist roles to support specifically their engagement in and management of LOTC.

29. The remodelling agenda is bringing about a number of changes in relation to schools' provision of LOTC. The traditional assumptions that only teachers can organise and supervise these activities have been re-appraised in schools where remodelling has taken place appropriately and there are now many examples of schools engaging appropriately qualified support staff in organising, co-ordinating and supervising LOTC activities. Importantly, remodelling has removed from teachers many of the time consuming administrative tasks often associated with these activities, including arranging transport and accommodation and undertaking parental liaison.

30. Ofsted, in their recent evaluation report—*Workforce reform in schools: has it made a difference?*—concluded that where remodelling has taken place, there has been a positive impact on the work of teachers and headteachers and better outcomes for pupils:

"In the most effective schools visited, workforce reform made a considerable difference to pupils' learning when leaders deployed their staff well, gave them clear professional status and held them accountable for their work." (Ofsted, 2010: 5)

31. In the context of LOtC, the workforce reform agenda has enabled many thousands of schools to deliver enhanced and increasingly personalised learning opportunities for pupils, within the classroom and beyond.

32. In 2008, Ofsted identified that the workload in connection with LOtC preparation was “excessive” and that, too often, LOtC relied upon “much goodwill from members of staff, requiring them, for example, to visit locations beforehand and to plan them in their own time” (2008: 23). The Ofsted evaluation of how to support effective LOtC activity concluded that “the most effective single strategy was the use of well trained administrative support staff to organise transport, make bookings, collect money and contribute to preparing risk assessments. This allowed teachers to concentrate on the educational planning and preparation” (2008: 23). Ofsted also concluded that teachers’ workloads could be reduced by the use of generic risk assessments for common activities, co-facilitation by providers and, within schools, by the deployment of an educational visits coordinator.

33. The NASUWT recognises and agrees with the conclusions reached by Ofsted and, moreover, that where LOtC is an integral part of the curriculum, these activities are more likely to be rewarding in terms of their educational value. An integrated curriculum approach ensures that the implementation of LOtC is more likely to be sustainable in practice since the associated planning and organising activities will be more efficient and streamlined (see Ofsted, 2008: 24).

34. The School Workforce Social Partnership has, over the last seven years, monitored carefully schools’ implementation of workforce remodelling and found that LOtC has benefited considerably where schools have remodelled. The NASUWT recognises that remodelling has enabled schools to provide a wider range of educational experiences for learners and “in ensuring that pupils’ experiences outside the classroom benefited their learning” (Ofsted, 2010: 21).

RARELY COVER

35. “Rarely covering” is an integral part of the overall package of contractual change set out in the National Agreement. The purpose of the contractual provision is to contribute to raising educational standards by freeing teachers and headteachers from tasks which do not require their professional skills and expertise and enabling them to focus on their core function of teaching and leading and managing teaching and learning.

36. The objective of progressive movement towards a position where teachers and headteachers may only be required to cover only rarely for absent colleagues was clearly set out in the National Agreement on “Raising Standards and Tackling Workload”, which was signed in January 2003. In 2007, the STPCD included advance notice that all schools, from 1 September 2009, should have secured the position of teachers and headteachers covering rarely in cases of absence. This guidance was provided in the 2007 and the 2008 editions of the STPCD.

37. The effective and sustainable delivery of the “rarely cover” contractual provision is being achieved in schools that have provided extended and enhanced opportunities for the deployment of support staff as part of the education team.

38. Since 2003–04, there have been numerous examples of schools where teachers and headteachers have been required to cover only rarely. However, since 1 September 2009, all schools have been required to consult on and establish robust systems to ensure that teachers and headteachers cover for absent colleagues only rarely. A “robust system” is defined as one which delivers this contractual entitlement and is capable of dealing with all foreseeable events.

39. The trigger for cover is the absence of the person timetabled to take the particular class or group. All schools have been issued with clear advice that all types of absence should be carefully managed to minimise the impact on teaching and learning.

40. The STPCD confirms that schools have a range of options available to them to ensure that teachers cover only rarely, including the following:

- (a) engage supply teachers;
- (b) employ support staff (directly or in collaboration with local schools):
 - as cover supervisors, where cover supervision is the core part of their role (when not required for cover, they could be assigned, eg, to provide additional support to teachers in class or to carry out administrative tasks);
 - as discrete cover supervisors whose sole role is to provide cover supervision;
 - as TAs/HLTAs as part of a wider school role;
 - as pastoral managers who may be required for part of their time to provide cover; and
 - in a multi-faceted role of which a part is cover or cover supervision;
- (c) employ teachers specifically for cover (directly or in collaboration with local schools);
- (d) use agency staff; or
- (e) employ a teacher on a short-term contract.

41. The STPCD confirms that schools can and should continue to include LOtC as part of their curriculum offer, and the STPCD guidance on this issue remains unaffected as a result of the transition to “rarely cover” in 2009.

42. Where LOtC is included as part of a school’s planned programme of activity, it should be included in the school’s calendar and the annual teaching timetable for the teacher. However, it is recognised that not every activity can be anticipated fully at the start of each academic year. Therefore, there is a clear provision within the STPCD guidance which enables schools to review and revise their timetables during the year in light of significant changes (eg to accommodate a significant educational development). However, to avoid compromising other aspects of a school’s curriculum provision, all schools have been encouraged to plan activities well in advance and in consultation with staff and union representatives. Changes to the calendar should not be a frequent occurrence.

43. The NASUWT understands that schools do need to prioritise their activities throughout the year, in light of the resources available to them, and their taking account of the potential that some activities could trigger the need for cover for absence.

44. Schools that have remodelled are implementing rarely cover by making suitable provision in their calendars for specific activity days/weeks which would facilitate the continuation of educationally valuable activities, including LOtC. During such activity days, the normal timetable pattern is suspended in order to accommodate alternative patterns of staff deployment to meet particular curriculum demands.

45. The NASUWT recognises that one effect of “rarely cover” is that it will require a degree of discipline within schools to plan carefully, to seek to anticipate teaching and learning requirements and deployment priorities across the year, and to do so in greater detail than perhaps many schools have done previously. A failure to plan and consult appropriately could impact on a school’s flexibility and capacity. The reliance on staff goodwill is not an appropriate basis for ensuring the delivery of pupils’ educational entitlements; this is especially true where such goodwill results in teachers being deployed in ways that are professionally inappropriate, or where their performance is compromised by the absence of appropriate professional time or support to enable them to plan and discharge their teaching and learning responsibilities effectively.

March 2010

REFERENCES

Ofsted (2008) *Learning Outside the Classroom: How Far Should You Go?*

Ofsted (2009) *Workforce Reform in Schools: Has It Made a Difference? An evaluation of changes made to the school workforce 2003–09*

Witnesses: **Dr Mary Bousted**, General Secretary, Association of Teachers and Lecturers, **Mick Brookes**, General Secretary, National Association of Head Teachers, **Amanda Brown**, Assistant Secretary, Employment, Conditions and Rights, National Union of Teachers, **John Morgan**, President, Association of School and College Leaders, and **Dr Patrick Roach**, Assistant General Secretary, NASUWT, gave evidence.

Chairman: I welcome Mick Brookes, Amanda Brown, John Morgan, Dr Patrick Roach and Dr Mary Bousted. Do those of you with doctorates mind if I just call you by your first names from now on? It is a pleasure to see you all. Some of you are old hands. Mick has been in front of the Committee before. If I remember rightly, Amanda gave us help on false allegations. I am glad that she has made it because I know she had some problems, as many of us have today. I don’t think that you, Patrick, have been with us before. You are welcome. John, you were here even last week.

John Morgan: I enjoyed it so much.

Chairman: We have former Secretaries of State in front of us next week and apparently there is a high premium on the tickets—even to be in the Gallery. Can we get started? We know you. You know us. Most of you heard the previous session, so let us build on it and get straight into the questions.

Q47 Annette Brooke: Following on from the previous session, why isn’t it happening? It just seems incredible. We have a quote from the NASUWT in response to our 2005 report. We called

on it to review its advice to members not to participate in school trips due to the risk of litigation. If I can take fear of taking risk as a background, why on earth are we not moving forward on something that is regarded as a good thing by nearly everybody?

Chairman: That is to you, Patrick.

Dr Roach: It does seem to fall to me to give the opening contribution and to be absolutely clear about the position of the NASUWT in respect of learning outside the classroom. The NASUWT is a signatory to the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto and was instrumental, along with other social partners, in supporting the establishment of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom and developments such as an out-and-about package for schools and education providers, and the quality badge scheme. The NASUWT’s position is to advise its members to consider carefully their engagement in learning outside the classroom. It is not about saying to our members, “You must not participate in learning outside the classroom”, but saying, “Does learning outside the classroom have an educational value? Is it making an educational contribution? Is it

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part of a planned and coherent programme of curriculum delivery? Are you managing risk appropriately with regard to learning outside the classroom?” In terms of the question, there is clearly an understanding and recognition that there are a number of fears and apprehensions out there about learning outside the classroom. One fear is indemnification—for want of a better term. It is important to allay those fears on the part of teachers.

Q48 Chairman: I thought we did that five years ago with our report.

Dr Roach: Yes, in part, it did that, but other work has had to take place since then. A lot of work has taken place since then; the quality badge and the Council are all new developments.

Q49 Chairman: Research shows that the average local authority pays £475 in compensation. It is a low level of risk, isn't it?

Dr Roach: Well, it may be a low level of risk if viewed in terms of the average cost of compensation claims across local authorities, but in respect of its impact on individuals and on individual institutions, and their anxieties in participating, it is quite significant. That is why we have invested a lot of energy as a union, but also working in social partnership with the DCSF and supporting the development of the Council and the quality badge, to begin to allay the fears of schools and teachers about participating and learning outside the classroom. One of the reasons why we have been very keen to sign up to the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto is to give a very positive message to schools that it can be done in a managed way, and in a way that schools can feel safe and secure about what they are doing and feel confident going forward. Schools working with approved providers who are in receipt of the quality badge is a key part of the process of allaying fears. Providing an out-and-about package, which provides clear tools, techniques and strategies for how teachers can engage in learning outside the classroom, is another way of building confidence within the school community that, yes, learning outside the classroom is something that we can do, rather than something that we can't or won't do.

Q50 Annette Brooke: I would like to press the same question a bit more. My question was why it isn't happening. You are telling me the reasons why it should be happening.

Chairman: Let's riff around. Mary.

Dr Bousted: I was very interested in the evidence in the last session. There is a problem with integrating learning outside the classroom into the mainstream curriculum, particularly a curriculum which is highly regulated and highly assessed. What I would like to add to the discussion is that the evidence is that it is the children in the schools serving the poorest intake who probably have the most need. That was the evidence from the last session, but it is also the evidence we have at ATL. It is also in the schools where children are the most likely to need to read real stories in real books that they will get rigid drilling in the test items because it is those schools

where they are under the most pressure to get through—get the levels and the SATs and get up the league tables. There is something about a conception of curriculum, a conception of teaching and learning and an accountability framework. When you think about all the assessments where schools are judged in the league tables at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, the vast majority of that—certainly all of it in the league tables at Key Stages 2 and 3—is on the written word. If you say that is how your school will be judged—just on writing down what you know—then it is willy-nilly. We all make pious statements about learning outside the classroom, but how that actually comes to be valued when the system says, “We don't value it as much. We value writing more than anything else” is a problem. Schools under the most pressure in that accountability framework may not be spending the time; they may also have issues about resources and parents. An issue was raised in the last session about the parents of particular groups of pupils not being keen on them learning outside the classroom. They may not be very keen on them going on weekend adventure trips. I remember when my daughter was in year 5, she went to a multicultural, inner-city London school. They were being taken away for an activity weekend. She had just started at the school. We had just moved to London. It was a brilliant event. They did tree climbing and nature walks. She bonded with the class. All the girls who didn't go were from ethnic minorities—Muslim girls—whose parents would not let them go on the trip. There is a whole range of things. We all have pious words about learning outside the classroom, but if in the end that is not what the system actually says it values, it starts on a lower level than other activities that might seem to have more direct correlation to where you are in the league tables.

Chairman: Okay. Let's move to Mick.

Mick Brookes: There are a number of things, some of which you have heard before, but I will just underline them. First, it may not be actual litigation but fear of litigation that is putting people off. We know—I have said this in other places, and I know the ATL has done work on this—that there has been an increase in false, frivolous and malicious allegations made by parents, who think that they can make these allegations without any redress or responsibility.

Chairman: Our Committee has been very helpful on that.

Mick Brookes: Yes. It has indeed, which is why I was referring to it. Hopefully you will continue, because it is something that we, as an association, have been pushing. There is that fear of litigation, which is greater than the actual litigation itself. The other thing I would refer to is the organisational bureaucracy in terms of taking children on school trips. We think the badging mechanism is useful. I have referenced the heads of outdoor education centres—NAHT members—who have got a super badge together. Schools can send their children to those centres without having to be too concerned about the risk for the centre. That is helpful, but there is certainly bureaucracy around it. Willingness

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of staff to get involved is something else, particularly when staff will be away from families for extended visits, which are excellent occasions. There are two more short points. Certainly, funding has always been an issue, particularly the affordability of less well-off parents, or the children of less well-off parents. That will get tighter as funding decreases, particularly in local authorities, many of which will be hard pressed to keep their outdoor learning centres open. I have evidence of some of the unintended consequences from right across the country. Some of our members are finding cancellations at their centres because of the rarely cover issue, which NAHT indeed signed up to and we support, but we need to look at unintended consequences and put them right. My final point—you would expect me to say this—is that for Key Stage 2, year 6 children, visits are squeezed into June, July and September because of the SAT situation. This Committee has also pronounced on that.

Chairman: That was pretty all-encompassing, Mick, but you know as well as I do—because I go to many schools where the head is keen on out-of-school learning—that when it happens it permeates the school's culture.

Mick Brookes: Yes.

Q51 Chairman: Why can't we get that more generalised, even leaning on traditionally reluctant parents—those from a Muslim background with daughters in the school—with the right kind of nice pressure? Why can't we spread that culture across schools rather than relying just on the head's leadership?

Mick Brookes: Chair, I absolutely endorse what you said. My personal testimony to this is that when I leave this job at the end of the summer term, one of the first things I will do is to accompany my wife's school on its outdoor adventure week, provided I get a CRB check, of course, which is important. We need to encourage this, and I think that was said during the previous session. What we need to do is to see this as a major priority, because you know and I know that heads in particular are buried under their administrative duties, and getting their heads up from that is very difficult, because there is clearly another raft of administration involved in setting this up.

Amanda Brown: I agree with everything that people have said. Clearly the demands of the National Curriculum and a narrowing of the curriculum have had some impact. Mary mentioned the fact that there will be curriculum activities that can be very valuable outside the classroom, but other activities can be valuable in developing children's and pupils' general experiences, their personality and the possibility of acting in ways that they do not normally act in. We think that is valuable, and we have always told our members that we believe it is a valuable way of spending their time when they can, but I think we need to recognise the fact that obviously there is a cost, and certainly we believe that is one of the unintended consequences of rarely cover, which we support, because clearly it is right that teachers should have more available time to

focus on their own areas, as well as others. We support that, but one of the unintended consequences is that both professional development, which we may talk about, and school visits and trips outside school have been hit. Evidence is coming in from members all the time that even planned visits are now being cancelled because it is believed that they can no longer be covered under rarely cover. As well as that, there are other unintended consequences of rarely cover—in particular, the impact on our supply members. Due to the cost of employing qualified teachers, that is no longer happening in some schools, and non-teacher-qualified staff are being employed instead. Around all those aspects, we are seeing a particular vulnerability in the availability of school trips at the moment.

Q52 Chairman: But you haven't really said why these unintended consequences of rarely cover have ended up with your members interpreting things in a rather different way than was intended.

Amanda Brown: I am not sure it's the interpretation; that is certainly not what I am suggesting. In the past, teachers have taken the strain by working very long hours and additionally volunteering to do school trips and undertake other activities. Now, because they are no longer able to cover, and will no longer cover for their colleagues if they are on school trips, there is difficulty in finding proper staffing both in the school and to take school trips. As a result, there is less flexibility for that within school staffing arrangements.

Q53 Chairman: So the only people who suffer are the children. That doesn't sound a very good recommendation for the teaching unions does it? You've negotiated something that ends up with a deterioration in the educational opportunities for young people up and down this country.

Amanda Brown: Well, there may be an issue around that.

Q54 Chairman: I'm sorry Amanda, it is what members of the Committee feel. We took evidence when we were doing training of teachers that I understand your boss didn't particularly like—the comment we saw from the press said that she hadn't read the whole report. We took evidence that rarely cover has been interpreted by your members in a way not intended, leading to a deterioration in children's ability to get a full education. Come on, is that true or not?

Amanda Brown: No, we don't believe that—

Q55 Chairman: Well, you'll have a more comfortable life for your members, but damn the children's prospects.

Amanda Brown: I think all teachers feel that they would like to participate in those sorts of activities. If there is insufficient funding behind it to allow for proper staffing, it is not people choosing not to do it, it is an inability to do so within the framework.

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Q56 Chairman: So you want an absolutely platinum-lined guarantee every time someone goes out of school for CPD as well as out-of-school learning? It is very disturbing that rarely cover is affecting the training, upgrading and professional skills of your profession, and all of you seem to be quite complacent about it.

Dr Bousted: No. I think you've just made a number of quite wrong statements and we need to go back to first principles. The first principle is that cover is not a good use of teachers' time. It is a complete waste of a teacher's time to be sitting in the front of a class, getting the work from another teacher and sitting there baby-minding the class. That is what most cover is about. I was a teacher for 14 years. I am an English teacher, and there is very little that I can do in a maths or science classroom—I'm sorry, but there it is. I'm quite good if I'm put in front of an English class, and I can do quite a good job in a drama classroom. I can manage history, but in most of the cover I did, I did not have the subject knowledge to do the job. If you expected the system to do that, we would be in front of a Select Committee and the outrage would be that teachers who are not qualified are teaching subjects that they are not qualified for. Let's not have a Catch-22 on that. Cover is not a good use of teachers' time. It takes teachers away from the time that they should be spending planning lessons and assessing pupils' work. It is a diminution of a teacher's job. We already know that teachers do more overtime than in virtually any other area of the public sector. The non-contact periods in the day, the PPA time, is incredibly important. They will have loads of things to do. It may be phoning parents, doing a piece of work on the internet or assessing work that has been done before. If that is eaten into by even just an hour baby-minding, that worsens your teaching for the rest of the day and for the week. The idea that rarely cover comes in to lessen the educational experience of pupils is entirely wrong-headed. That is not the case. Rarely cover gives teachers the guaranteed time to improve their educational practice. A lot was said about this, and in fact the point came through in the last session: if learning outside the classroom is important, as Patrick said, it should be planned into the curriculum. The school should have a calendar for the year where those educational activities that focus on learning outside the classroom are planned in. That being the case, the school has a whole range of options available. Timetables could be changed, so in that week a teacher knows that they will not get that non-contact period, and they can plan to take part in other activities. If it is a properly remodelled school there should be properly qualified support staff, and I absolutely go head to head with Amanda here. An HLTA or a cover supervisor will be able to do just what a teacher does in most cover situations, or better because they know the pupils. They can go in and take those lessons. It should be planned and it should be planned for. If that is the case, there should not be any diminution in out-of-learning activities. What it comes down to is effective leadership, the belief of the school leadership that learning outside the classroom is important, and

effective planning to integrate that into the curriculum. As Annette said in the previous evidence session, those schools in which that is believed and in which it is taking place are not seeing out-of-school visits go down. It is about the individual culture of the school, planning, making learning outside the classroom important and seeing it as important, alongside lessons in the classroom. It is about a view of education and learning, and for that we have to rely on effective school leadership, which sees learning in a holistic way and then creates the conditions in school for it to happen. We can go on about funding until we are blue in the face. Schools have been funded better over the past 10 years than they have been for decades. We have seen a huge improvement in per-pupil level funding and in the conditions under which children learn. In the end, you have to just put it to school leaders and say, "Use the resources you have been given for effective deployment in the schools. That's your job." Some of them can do it and some of them can't, which suggests that it is not a national system level. To return to my original point, rarely cover is not about denying pupils educational experience; it is about raising the standards of educational experience. What is it that those countries that are quoted at us so often—particularly the Pacific rim countries—have that we don't that helps raise standards? Their class sizes are actually significantly bigger than ours. What they have is that about 50% of their working time is spent planning and assessing work. They spend less time teaching and more time preparing for teaching.

Q57 Chairman: But on that particular point, we had evidence during the previous session, which I think you heard, of people cancelling planned visits months in advance, so it is not only about planning in advance.

John Morgan: I think the Committee needs cheering up. I've been watching your faces and listening. I was quite pleased when this session started without too much mention of rarely cover. Let me update you as a head teacher in whose school no teacher has covered a single lesson for the past two years. I lead an 11-to-18 school. I hear what Mary says and I think she is absolutely right. There is certainly no reason at all why rarely cover should cause any change in students learning outside the classroom. I guarantee you that my students aged 11 to 18 have had more learning outside the classroom since we started this than ever before. It is not just a one-off. Please don't start a chapter on rarely cover in your report. It is one of the last bricks in a work force agreement that has spread over five years and is moving towards focusing teachers on teaching and preparing, and on making learning better. That is certainly happening in the secondary sector now. We have heard about the restriction in the curriculum, but HM Government have of course had the good sense to do away with Key Stage 3 SATs and to free up the Key Stage 3 curriculum. We are starting to see the effects of that freedom. We have much more relevant learning in the qualifications now available for 14 to 19, and we are starting to see that relevant

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learning being placed in contexts other than the classroom. It takes some organising. Let me tell you about one of the key things and how we do it in my school. It is not just our idea, but it is one way which I used when I was training our leaders last year on how to prepare for this. You see flexibility used with timetables, so you will find schools where, for example, every second Friday, the timetable is a block timetable for the school, or you might find a school that has really embraced the flexibilities of Key Stage 3, so they now have larger blocks on their timetable. They don't have 45-minute lessons or one-hour lessons; they have a morning lesson and an afternoon lesson. That allows for Key Stage 3 a more integrated approach to the curriculum—rather like our primary colleagues have been doing for many a year—to bring learning to life. When you have that sort of system set up in your school, rarely cover ain't a problem, because if you lead a large group to go out and you have a large group of teachers assigned to teach them, they all go out together and the rest of the school carries on as normal. If you have the whole school timetable collapsed for the day—to take year 7 on a bus for an intensive day's learning at a science centre up in Newcastle; to offer sex education to year 8 with experts coming in, in the whole and the round; and to offer year 9 work experience placements or industrial experience placements at a premiership football club that may be leading it—you can actually manage it. In our school, whenever we have such a day, two of our seven years are actually off-site. The other five have got a bit more space to spread around. No cover's needed at all, because it's planned into the timetable. And absolutely as Mary said—I caught the second half of the last evidence session—the way to make sure that the curriculum is enlivened and enriched by learning outside the classroom is to plan it in advance. In the previous times, you would find that you would say, “Oh, that looks like a cute course.” A teacher would come along and say, “Please could I take my class out on that trip? It looks interesting.”

Q58 Chairman: John, you are doing a wonderful job. I am sure there are marvellous schools like yours out there; but you will remember the last time you gave evidence to us it was on the science head. We are getting reports, not just from this inquiry into out-of-school learning, that CPD—crucial to the future of your work force as teachers and heads—is suffering. Even the wonderful new York centre for the teaching of science and the nine regions are finding that you cannot get people coming on those wonderful courses to enrich their teaching experience because, they tell us, of rarely cover. You say in a good, well-organised school it wouldn't matter, and it doesn't affect it, and we agree with you, but what we are saying is the average school seems to be finding real problems because people are using rarely cover as an excuse not to participate either in CPD visits or out-of-school learning.

John Morgan: The whole system is not perfect and will not suddenly change overnight, and I would agree that when rarely cover was first mentioned as one aspect of a work force agreement, back in 2003,

it seemed a long way off that we'd reach “rarely”, and certainly some schools have found it more difficult—possibly those that are suffering from some of the unfairness of some of the funding distribution at the moment; but, like Mary, I don't want to blame funding. We're not well funded, but we made hard decisions. We probably are employing slightly fewer of Mary's members because of it, but we are enlivening the teaching. There's only a certain pot, isn't there? There are only some things you can do. We have some outstanding cover supervisors and, day by day, trips have been enhanced for the last few years by the work force agreement. Back in 2003 if I wanted to send a year group off I'd need to send eight teachers with them. Since then we've had non-teachers in schools working with children, and in 2004 I was sending four teachers and four teaching assistants—a lot cheaper, and four more teachers still back in the classroom. In 2008 two lead teachers went, plus six. There was a year manager, who knew them well, but with no breakdown in the timetable, so there'd be fewer lost lessons. What the Committee has to realise is that to change that culture takes a while. It doesn't happen overnight—not by a long way—and the challenge for us in the next few years is not to use it as an excuse; and I did hear it from the previous people, saying “Maybe it's being used as an excuse.” People who run excellent training centres will of course look for any excuse if the number of people coming to their training centres for training falls down. For all those who think they run excellent training centres—and the science one certainly is—there are many others who would say, “The best way to train is to take a teacher away from their learning centre and stick them in our course, and charge them the cost of travel, the cost of a supply, as well as the cost of the course.” Far more effective, often, is to bring somebody from that centre into the school. Learning outside the classroom—that's different. I heard what you said about teacher training. I thought Mike Tomlinson's idea was perfectly fair. You can't do it all, but it would be nice to think it was an element of it.

Chairman: John, let's hold you there.

Q59 Mr Timpson: One of the great British traditions is the mass exodus of children on coaches in June to various exciting learning experiences around the country. It's something that Mick touched on earlier. Why are schools—and it's perhaps again related to what Mary said about planning—still using the back end of the summer term as the time when children go on their learning outside of their classroom experiences? And, in answering that question: this tradition is under threat from 2011 with the SATs moving from May to June in the school year, particularly with Key Stage 2 in year 6, which was mentioned. Is that going to force the hand of head teachers who perhaps are reluctant to plan, or what is the effect going to be? Is it just going to push it into the summer holiday period? Anyone want to have a go on that?

Chairman: Mary should be first.

Dr Bousted: I don't think I have anything. I would prefer John to go on that one, actually—unusually.

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Chairman: Well, Patrick would be good.

Dr Roach: We are all falling over ourselves to have a go. On the timing of learning outside the classroom, I think it is also important just to step back a bit. We are referring to learning outside the classroom and I am not always sure that we are speaking the same language. Learning outside the classroom encompasses a wide range of activities, as the previous Select Committee's report on this topic confirmed. Actually, by and large, the majority of learning outside the classroom takes place within the perimeters of the school. It is outside the classroom, but it is within the perimeters of the school. It gives the opportunity for pupils to explore the school and its surroundings. Certainly I have no evidence that that kind and range of activity is squeezed only into the latter part of the summer term. You referred to the example of the coach trips that are disappearing to various far-flung regions in the country as the learning outside the classroom experience. Well, that denotes a particular kind of experience. I think that what Mary and what the ATL said earlier, in their evidence about the effects of the accountability regime and how that impacts on skewing the curriculum so that the curriculum offer is skewed in particular parts of the academic years, is an important issue that we need to attend to—not tests per se, but the accountability regime that underpins what it is that schools do, which drives the nature of practice within schools and school organisations. That is an issue that may need to be looked at. I contend that for many schools, primary and secondary, learning outside the classroom—in terms of the array of activities that take place within the perimeters, but also beyond the perimeters of the school—does take place throughout the school year.

John Morgan: I can't speak for the primary sector, but if you ask 14-year-old girls to go and do a river study in February—that is why you don't take them out in February. Students are human and they feel the cold. Quite a lot of the trips happen in the summer because usually it is a little warmer. In reality, Patrick is absolutely right. There are two types of trip: a trip up to a day long is one thing; overnight is a completely different issue. All the positive things I have said about trips up to a day long are not quite so true for a full week's visit, or a language exchange and so on. As I have already said, we now have the structure there and you will see, if you keep taking the analyses at secondary level, there is more and more learning outside the classroom happening. Year after year, you will find more schools moving into the patterns of not the best ones, but the ones that have already adapted. There are different reasons why some schools have been able to manage it more quickly, more easily. All of us here would have expected a lot more fuss about rarely cover than there has been. The teaching profession leadership and teachers themselves should be congratulated, because we all know how big a challenge it has been. At the moment, it is working extremely well—far better. I was very worried, having led courses on rarely cover, that as I took over the presidency of the Association of School and College Leaders, the news in the second

week of September would be “Teachers at leaders' throats because rarely cover not being put through”. That is not the case. It has been managed extremely well across a huge national system. Yes, there are worries. Yes, there are people who are using it as an excuse and it ain't an excuse. There is no reason why people cannot do it. The cost might be an excuse, but not rarely cover.

Chairman: Okay, John, we don't want to get totally bogged down in rarely cover. It is an important aspect, but we are trying to drill down on what we mean by it and whether people in front of the Committee this morning believe in the value of out-of-school learning and how we can deliver that.

Mick Brookes: If I can focus, Edward, on what you were saying, hopefully, whoever is running education this time next year will have taken note of the Select Committee's comments, and the nonsense of high-stakes testing in May will be behind us; and let me state we do not have a problem with testing. This is focusing on cramming things into a small period of time. I absolutely agree with my colleagues that children and young people are using school premises and the perimeter. I would like to focus on the importance, in my experience as a head and as a teacher, of wilderness experiences, building on what you were saying, Chair, about the halving of numbers going out into green places. Where there are children from challenged backgrounds, it is so important to take them out of their area. In my area of North Nottinghamshire, some children had never been to Nottingham, even, because it is too far away. Taking those children out on wilderness experiences, taking them up Snowdon, is a really important part of their education. We should do everything we possibly can, whoever is involved in education, to promote those activities. To give one example, my school visited Sherwood Forest. One child on the coach said, “Look, Mr Brookes, there's a squirrel without a tail.” It was a rabbit.

Q60 Paul Holmes: Everything I was going to ask on rarely cover has been asked already, so can I ask a more general question, partly as a counter to a lot of the evidence we have already had and partly as a counter to the Chairman's more aggressive approach in a different direction. Was there ever a golden period of out-of-school visits that we have now lost because of rarely cover, or whatever, and are out-of-school visits always an unalloyed benefit? When I was a head of history I knew that every time I or my department organised an out-of-school visit, I caused a lot of problems for the rest of the school. The other teachers lost their non-contact time to babysit, and a chemistry teacher could not take my history lesson while I wasn't there. While my 100 kids were out having a great history experience, they were missing from a maths lesson, a chemistry lesson, an English lesson or whatever else was going on that day. Was there ever really that golden age? When you're taking kids out of school they are missing other lessons; they are missing other learning experiences. That is causing problems for the other subjects.

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John Morgan: It is good to hear that experience from a time I remember. You are absolutely right. There was never a golden age. A golden age is upon us now. We have the infrastructure and the need, we have the flexibility in the curriculum. The testing regime is being eased off a bit, we are not just maths, English and science. It is possible now, certainly in the secondary sector, to structure your timetables. You will find that, instead of the historians going out, the history trips in my school and many others now take place on a fixed day when everybody knows they are going out. So nobody misses their maths. It is part of the timetable. It is planned curriculum. Random planning of the curriculum has never been good. If a teacher woke up this morning and said, "Oh, I think I'll do something else because I've heard it on the radio", we would be horrified. Teaching is a more sophisticated skill than that. The doctor could wake up and said, "Oh, I'll pull someone's appendix out this morning. I haven't done it for a while." That does not go on any more. We are a much more sophisticated profession and we plan our curriculum very carefully. We plan it with flexibilities within it. We might not be exactly sure what outcomes we will get from that history trip, but by gum we know that it was necessary for that trip to take place, or the art or the biology or the science that we've heard about. I think it's there, but it does not happen overnight. If you come back and take evidence after this year is over, once we have got through to the nice warm months of June and July, you will see that there has been more learning outside the classroom, believe you me, in many secondary schools. The year after that there will be even more. Gradually we will move away, I hope, from feeling that we have to test everything. More and more we realise that to be a 21st century country we need to develop not just knowledge-based skills but the skills that are developed when you learn outside the classroom, whether that is at the top of Snowdon, getting to the top of Snowdon, helping somebody down from the top of Snowdon, or researching in a real situation, such as working on an archaeological site and experiencing the joy of finding something and showing it to one of your peers. Those sorts of things develop the innovative, creative, imaginative people whom we are being encouraged to create through the flexibilities that are now coming into our curriculum. We haven't had that for a long time. You won't undo that in a year. But come back year after year and check on this and you will see the benefits of that flexibility coming in. As a Committee, please don't allow anyone to bring more testing to us. Don't suddenly say that someone should—

Chairman: Don't get indigestion, John. We're doing that with four former Secretaries of State on Monday. I'm sorry if anyone interpreted that, as Paul did, as aggression. I was merely trying to get the best out of you. Mary's spirited response made it all worth while.

Mick Brookes: Just two points. I want to come back on this random planning of the curriculum. I think John is speaking from a different system. Let me tell you, the best poetry I ever got out of any children at any time was when I worked at a little school in

Lincolnshire and the dyke diggers came—they were digging out the dykes—and we did some brilliant poetry on prehistoric animals and how they look like mechanical monsters. This is primary experience, and I was able to respond. I didn't know they were there, so I couldn't plan it in advance, and we should not discount that. Education is far too systematised now, and I think that's a problem, more so for the secondary sector. There's an important point to be made about benefit. While a geography field trip or a science experience will be a focused visit for a specific purpose, I don't think we should be too narrow in defining what we mean by educational benefits. Children went up Snowdon and saw for the first time the wonder of the place in which we live—that to me is deep learning. You can't call it geography.

Q61 Chairman: The top of Snowdon sounds more challenging. Patrick seems to be rather content within the perimeter of the school. Most of the NASUWT seem to come from Birmingham, where there is lovely countryside if you get out of Birmingham. Surely the aspiration for out-of-school learning should be better than a playground in the centre of Birmingham.

Dr Roach: Oh, Chair, you've obviously not been to Birmingham recently.

Chairman: We're very fond of Birmingham.

Dr Roach: The perimeters of the school are important, but exploring the environment beyond the school is equally important. We create the conditions so that more schools and young people can access that and those kinds of opportunities. So much the better. Hence, as I said at the start, our commitment to the Manifesto and learning outside the classroom, our commitment to the establishment of a council in this area to be a real champion for learning outside the classroom across the country, and our commitment to the establishment of a quality badge, which can help give schools confidence in planning learning outside the classroom. The question about a golden age is important, and John has answered it far better than I would have done. Golden experiences, I think, have been true for some. Those who think back to their educational experiences can remember some of those golden moments when they went on an educational visit, and how rewarding and life-changing that was for them as individuals. But were those experiences shared equally even in a school where that experience was true for some pupils? It certainly wasn't generally the experience for all pupils. One issue that we raised in our written submission to the Committee was the experience of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, with disabilities and from low-income backgrounds, who are often excluded from those kinds of experience. That's not a place we want to be, frankly, in a 21st-century education system, and I know that that is not the place that this Select Committee wants to be.

Q62 Chairman: But, Patrick, you would expect this Committee to argue for access to a wide range of out-of-school experience for all children. One thing

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worries me; I don't know if it worries Graham. He's just come back from doing a bit of out-of-school experience—on the slopes, I believe. Some schools have enthusiasm for skiing trips. I don't know whether that is due to the enthusiasm of certain members of the student population or the addiction of some members of staff to skiing, but I certainly know schools in my own constituency that that appeals to, and it is restricted to the better off students.

Dr Roach: Yes, well, even in Birmingham there is a desire to escape its confines to go skiing. I simply recommend people to the Ackers ski slopes, in the northern part of Birmingham, to use the dry ski slopes there, rather than feeling the need to go off to Vancouver to go skiing.

Chairman: I've got to stop you there.

Q63 Mr Stuart: John, I am just trying to square what you said about there being more and more out of class learning with what we were talking about in the first session, which is that there is less and less, and it has been on a steep decline for quite some time.

John Morgan: I'm just trying to bring you up to date.

Q64 Mr Stuart: Have you got any data to back that up?

John Morgan: We are on a balance point. There have been a lot of reasons to restrict it such as pressure from examinations, the lack of flexibility in the curriculum and so on. The curriculum is now being opened up. The primary curriculum is looking for more creativity and more freedom for the teachers; I am sure that they will welcome that.

Q65 Chairman: Is there a new golden age for out-of-school learning coming?

John Morgan: By gum, there is—out-of-school learning and around school learning. As Patrick says, don't get hung up about out-of-school learning.

Chairman: In Yorkshire, we don't say by gum any more. This is really refreshing. You're keeping this expression alive.

John Morgan: I live in an area where it would be a bit silly to talk about going to the top of Snowdon because it is a 1:6 hill out of my valley in the North York moors. I am lucky to have a single railway line running past with a steam train. I am in a different era, but I teach in the Tees Valley and it looks slightly different once I've come out of the hills. It would be silly to worry about any of the students in my area seeing the open green spaces—that is where they live. My students are slightly different because they are in a town. I have completely lost my point now.

Q66 Mr Stuart: Let's forget your point and move on to my question. One of our frustrations here is that we are always having people in front of us telling us that things are improving. I look back and whenever we talked about NEETs or anything else, it is always new schemes, things and reasons to be cheerful. You are a very cheerful witness and I enjoy your being here, even with the frequency that it has been happening lately.

John Morgan: I am free next Wednesday.

Q67 Mr Stuart: I want to know what the evidence is. The first session seemed to tell us that it was going down and down and down—a 7% reduction in one of the courses in the past 12 months and you are telling me that it is going in the opposite direction. Evidence that please.

John Morgan: I haven't got written data in that way. The evidence that I can tell you about is from the courses that we are running as an association about the new flexibilities in the curriculum—Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. I have brought this before the Committee from our curriculum specialist. The feedback we are getting from our members is that those who are really engaging with the new flexibilities, alongside a leadership that is properly engaged with the way to restructure a school year's curriculum and the structure of the school, are using that to create a different view of how the school curriculum is. I know that this Committee, as wise as you are, will have heard all sorts of examples during evidence—not necessarily about this—that schools are not just running on one-hour slots anymore.

Chairman: But John, we are not hearing—Mary is sitting at the back and her body language is, in a sense—

Mr Stuart: Don't attack Mary again.

Q68 Chairman: Mary, I get a feeling that you are reluctant and are wondering why on earth the Committee is looking at out-of-school learning.

Dr Bousted: No, you are misinterpreting me. I was listening to John. I found him very interesting.

Q69 Chairman: Mary, you were a very good witness today, you always are, but do you really care about out-of-school learning. We've got a lot of information that suggests that it is under pressure, unlike music, which has substantial investment and leadership. The leadership, funding and resourcing are not happening and the enthusiasm at the grassroots, among heads and staff, is not there. We need to change the culture, what part can the unions play in changing it?

Dr Bousted: Chair, first, can I say that I am very sorry if my body language indicated disengagement with what is going on. Actually, I was really listening very intently. I know that, when I get animated, I can say rather too much. I was trying to sit back and give others a go. I also know that I have a bit of an Irish temper, and I had already displayed it.

Chairman: You thought that you might attack John at any moment.

Dr Bousted: No, I was listening very carefully. I do think that there is a problem. It is something that I referred to first of all. It depends on how a school views a curriculum. Let us consider E M Forster and "only connect". I believe very strongly that real learning takes place when what we know is transformed by new knowledge. In schools, that transformation can happen in the classroom. But it happens also when what we have learnt in the classroom is grounded in real-lived experience, particularly the experience that we would not get

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normally through our daily lives. I think that that is really important. I was an English teacher, and my learning out of the classroom would be teaching Shakespeare. I taught in inner-city comprehensive schools, and my experience with the pupils was to take them on trips to the theatre, which I did all the time. It was not just that they saw the play in action and Shakespeare transformed, but they learnt all sorts of cultural things. When they went to the theatre, I would not let them take in bags of sweets. They could not talk to one another during the performance. There are cultural ways in which to behave when going to the theatre, which is different from going to films. I go back to what John and Paul said. In the past, such learning was very ad hoc. It caused huge disruption. You have to plan. You look at the curriculum for the year and look at what learning outside the classroom you want to do. There is only one thing that I would take up with the previous witnesses. A lot of them had a traditional idea about what CPD and learning outside the classroom meant. If they want their offer to be taken up and their experiences to be used, they have to think differently about what they are doing. It probably is the case that there will be fewer times when teachers can ship out of school for a week and do a course. That is the nature of the world that we are in. In the next comprehensive spending review, probably even less of that is likely to go on. A lot of CPD can take place in the classroom, but those providers should be thinking much more about distance learning. They should be thinking much more about getting themselves into schools or into groups of schools to regionalise what they are doing. If, for a whole variety of complex reasons, teachers cannot get to them, rather than coming here and moaning about it, they should be doing a bit more thinking about how to get to the system. The context has changed.

Chairman: We have only just spent £15 million on science. We shall have a last question from David.

Q70 Mr Chaytor: Each of your associations is concerned to raise the status of the teaching profession, but when the Committee in its report on teacher training recommended raising the entry qualifications, there was a deafening silence. Why

was that? Is that not a contradiction? How do you raise the status of a profession without raising the entry qualifications?

Dr Bousted: We responded. I put out a press release on that.

Mr Chaytor: Yes, and you said that, by concentrating on entry qualifications for student teachers, the Committee ignored the trend for a curriculum.

Dr Bousted: But it was not a deafening silence.

Mr Chaytor: But it was not an overwhelming endorsement.

Dr Bousted: No, it was not.

Q71 Mr Chaytor: Why was that?

Dr Bousted: The Committee's work is excellent in virtually every respect, although in that one it was a bit misguided. The percentage of teachers who are now coming straight from a degree is far less than it was even 15 years ago. Nearly 40% of people now going to teacher training have come from a degree with a substantial amount of work experience. To say that somebody with a third-class degree in engineering who has had 15 years' extremely successful experience, which they can bring into teaching, cannot be a teacher with all their other qualities is misguided.

Chairman: We didn't say that.

Dr Bousted: All right.

Q72 Mr Chaytor: I think we said that a 2.2 should be the minimum, but isn't the way round it simply to insert the word "usually", and then require the potential entrant to justify their other experience?

Dr Bousted: That would be a better way of doing it, yes. I was concerned that, by just having the blanket of 2.2 or above, we run the risk of barring entry to the profession to a huge range of people. I am thinking also of the report on vocational education, which recommended that lecturers with vocational qualifications should find it much easier to teach 14 to 19s. The landscape is changing, when a prescription like that does not fit into new patterns of provision. We have to be quite careful. It is a good, political soundbite, but how it works in practice is much more complicated.

Chairman: Mary, team, we have to pull up stumps as it is 12 o'clock. I am very sorry. We should have had more time. We appreciate your contribution this morning. This is probably the last time that we see the teaching professions in front of the Committee before the general election. We wish you very well.