

Adventure & Challenge – a case study

Morpeth School, Tower Hamlets, London



► Outward Bound® can change the lives of pupils, and I've seen this myself. I've witnessed social groups change, supposedly difficult pupils turn into active, positive learners and autistic pupils come out of their shells overnight. There are so many mini-miracles that occur, and that leave me speechless. ◀

Vanessa Best, Head of Music; Outward Bound residential co-ordinator

Fact box

School	Morpeth School, Comprehensive	Location	Tower Hamlets, London
School size	1,158	Student year groups	Y8, 9 and 10
Course objectives	Improve confidence to overcome new challenges Develop skills in setting and achieving personal goals Increase self awareness and personal responsibility Increase awareness of other people Improve ability to work and communicate with other people Increase concern for, and awareness of, the natural environment Develop action plan Enjoy and experience real adventures		

School background

Morpeth School is a mixed comprehensive school located in Tower Hamlets, in east London. The catchment area is incredibly diverse and the result is a truly multicultural school, with a mix of white, Bangladeshi, Caribbean, Turkish, African and Chinese students (to cover the main groups). This is seen as a strength within the school and one of their priorities is to develop a spirit of trust and understanding between students of different backgrounds.

The use of outdoor learning has been a key part of this process - the entire Year 7 group undertake a one day induction at a local centre, in addition to the full week long courses undertaken with The Outward Bound Trust in Years 8, 9 and 10.



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Adventures for life

Reasons for selecting this Outward Bound course

The Adventure and Challenge course is ideal for the variety of pupils coming through the school. Using this as the initial framework the school staff can work with the instructors to tailor each course to the ability of each group.

For the younger students the Outward Bound experience is a great confidence booster, building their team working and learning skills. For Year 9s the outdoor learning can be an ideal way to get students who struggle in a classroom environment back “on track” and motivated, while Year 10s may need a different level of challenge - perhaps using this as a reward for those going on to A-levels or working on their Duke of Edinburgh awards.

In all cases the courses fit in well with the school’s core “Learning to learn” focus, developing students’ ability to think creatively, reflect on their learning, participate effectively and work in teams. This, combined with the attention to different learning styles and the differentiation of tasks to allow for real inclusion, ensure that every course supports the school’s learning objectives perfectly.

Key outcomes identified by the school

Raised aspirations and broader horizons. Taking young people from the city into the wild and beautiful mountains, then letting them develop and succeed in that environment, greatly raises their self-belief and understanding of the world around them.

Changing behaviour. The Outward Bound experience has been a significant turning point in the approach to school and education for some children, as they learn new ways to relate to each other, to staff and to engage in their own education.

Cohesion and support. The courses really foster a sense of cohesion between pupils, whatever their background or ethnicity, and a strong sense of mutual respect and support develops over the week, and carries forward into the classroom.

Targeted learning. The flexibility of the Outward Bound programmes allows the school to identify issues or key areas of focus which they think are important for a particular group – creating a tailored learning experience rather than delivering a standard series of activities.

Extract from a student’s first experience of an overnight expedition:

“When I first arrived at the Outward Bound centre I thought all the activities would be easy, I was ready to do anything but I never thought it would be so challenging. One activity was going to be camping out overnight – in the winter. As the days went by I got more and more nervous about the overnight expedition but I was also excited because I had never done anything like that before.

I now have more confidence to do stuff like this that I never thought I could do before. It was a chance of a life time – this experience is going to stay with me forever. The sight of the mountains was absolutely beautiful. The bits that were the most beautiful were the moon, the waterfalls, the stars, the ice on top of the mountains, and the fog.

I would like to thank my team because they encouraged me when I thought I didn’t stand a chance”.

Maya, 13