

Loynes, Christopher ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9779-7954> (2015) The impact of residential experiences on pupils' health and learning. In: Lessons Near and Far: Research and Policy, 3 July 2015, University of East London, UK. (Unpublished)

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LEARNING AWAY

Dr Chris Loynes
Educational Advisor and
Reader in Outdoor Studies

‘One week worth a term.’

- Accelerated learning of underachieving maths students: ‘one week worth a term’ (Longrigg)
- Cutting truancy by 90%;(Stanway School)
- 10 times better comprehension and 4 times better retention across all curriculum areas (Gunnar-Furmark)
- Parents take up picnicking at weekends (Widewell)
- Adult education of parents of excluded students sees return to school (Tyneside)
- ‘Even when it (LOtC) is done badly it is still worth doing!’ (Ofsted)
- Link between better relationships and attainment (Williams)

The Partners



- 13 clusters from Hampshire to Glasgow
- 61 schools from nursery to secondary
- 9 hypotheses or theories of change ranging across curriculum delivery, study skills, changing pedagogy and culture change
- Many and varied strategies: student co-construction and leadership, exchanges, transition camps, living history, camping, working with families, film making, extended days and school grounds

Mixed methods

“With teachers I feel more comfortable around them & feel like I can have a laugh with them unlike before I felt they were only there to teach me”

“It helped me with my maths”

“I feel more comfortable working with people I wouldn’t usually work with”

“I talked to people I hadn’t talked to before”

“It raised my confidence lots”

“I learnt how to work together [&] how to listen to everyone”

“Because it was so fun I don’t feel worried about next year”

“I feel more confident to ask the teacher for help when I’m stuck”

“I talk to more pupils & made new friends”

Why brilliant residentials?

LEARNING

AWAY

Residentials provide the opportunity and experience of living with others.

This transforms relationships and develops a strong sense of community and belonging between staff and students involved. Our evaluators found that this sense of community supports a wide range of positive social and learning outcomes long after the return to school.

So what is it about the residential that uniquely builds this lasting and impactful sense of community? And how does this experience translate into short, medium and long-term outcomes for students?

This diagram sets out our theory about the changes that happen to learning through brilliant residential experiences.

Residentials bring:

The overnight stay and an intensity of experience

- Extended time away from home
- A new environment and routines
- Fewer distractions
- Opportunities to work intensively and be immersed in learning
- A collaborative community environment
- Unstructured time

A new context for relationships

- Opportunities to break down existing barriers, hierarchies and power relationships
- Students and teachers work more collaboratively in unfamiliar surroundings on unfamiliar tasks
- The teacher is not automatically the expert
- Residentials are a leveller for students and staff
- Opportunities to develop and practise key social skills

Different and varied opportunities to experience success

- A wide range of practical and physical challenges
- Opportunities for everyone to be successful at something
- Opportunities to overcome fears
- Immediate opportunities to revisit and build on learning experiences

New ways of learning

- A safe space to explore new ways of teaching and learning
- Focus on real-life activities and experiences
- Increased levels of student responsibility

Which in the short and medium term lead to:

Enhanced relationships

- Students and staff trust each other
- Students feel more able to ask staff for help
- Students feel more comfortable with each other
- Students are more able to empathise
- The sense of community is sustained

Improved engagement and confidence in learning

- Increased motivation and engagement
- Improved behaviour and attendance
- Increased participation in lessons
- More enjoyment of learning
- Enhanced confidence, resilience and wellbeing
- Increased ability to overcome challenges and try new activities

New and developing skills and understanding

- New learning continues to develop, including skills in: independent learning; study and research; self management; communication; team working and problem solving
- Deeper and better understanding of specific subjects/topics
- Developing vocabulary
- Improving creativity
- Meaningful opportunities to develop and practise leadership skills
- Increased ability to apply learning and skills in new contexts

Which in the longer term lead to:

- Improved achievement, progress and attainment
- Improved knowledge, skills and understanding
- Improved relationships
- Improved engagement
- Improved behaviour and attendance
- More successful transition experiences (at all key stages)
- Raised aspirations
- Greater cohesion and a sense of belonging
- Enhanced trajectories to work, sixth form, further and higher studies

Key ingredients

- New and intense experiences
- Community living
- Informal time
- Experiences of success
- Experiences of progression



Lotto

95%	£22.44	77%	82%
£90.71	72%	75%	103
1	11,461	84%	5

A change in relationships

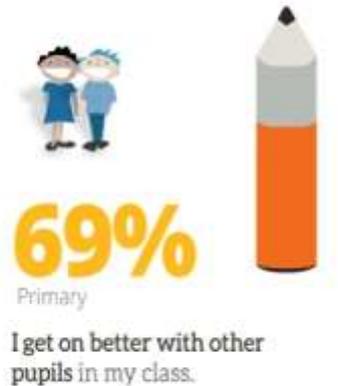
Key to impact are enhanced **relationships:**

- 97% think teachers know them better; 89% got to know people they didn't know before; 79% feel they get on better with teachers; 77% get on better with other pupils.



Relationships

- Schools are succeeding in boosting relationships between staff & pupils & amongst young people during their residential.
- The residential have enabled staff to build bridges with some pupils & enabled some pupils to trust staff more.
- There is also evidence of improved peer relationships. Pupils become more tolerant & caring of each other & develop a wider circle of friends.
- These improved relationships are sustained in the classroom and the playground post-residential.



Enhanced engagement in the classroom

Enhanced relationships lead to

- **Engagement:** Over 90% think their behaviour will be better & will try harder to be on time for school; 64% like school more because of the residential.



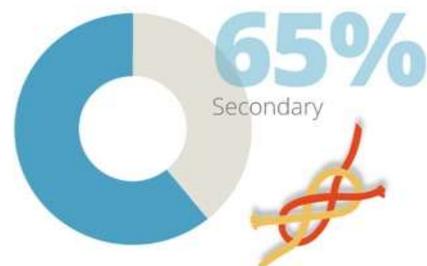
Learner engagement

There are signs that residentials promote deep engagement & engage previously disaffected pupils & those with challenging behaviour.

There is also evidence that the engagement is sustained back at school & evidence of improved achievement as a result.

The evidence suggests that the pupils are engaged because they:

- Enjoy the student-centred approaches (e.g. being involved in co-design & challenging, contextualised group problem-solving activities)
- Feel supported by their peers, with whom they enjoy better relationships.



I am **less likely** to give **up** when school work is difficult.



84%

All students

My **behaviour** in school will be **better**.

Improved knowledge and understanding

- This leads to impacts on:
- **Attainment:** 84% believe that the residential has helped them do better in subject(s) or school work
- **Knowledge & understanding:** 66% believe the way they were taught on the residential helped them learn; 66% improved problem-solving skills.
- **Transition:** 46% feel less worried about next year; 70% find it easier to make new friends - 'we' ve had no exclusions this year'



Attainment

Because the teaching & learning approaches used on residentials are different to those experienced by pupils at school:

- Context-based learning
- Learning tailored to pupils' needs, including extensive feedback
- Equal relationships between staff & pupils that promote their ownership of learning
- An emphasis on collaborative problem solving & decision-making.



53%

All students

The residential **helped me do better** in my school work.



91%

Primary

My learning in school is more interesting.

Culture change

- **Cohesion:** 69% feel the residential has helped them feel part of their school.
- **Resilience, confidence & wellbeing:** 82% of secondary pupils and 67% of primary are less likely to give up when they find things difficult at school.



‘We have seen how residential visits enable greater in-depth learning across a range of curriculum areas. In Year 6, our residential already drive the entire literacy curriculum. We have seen the impact too in developing personal and interpersonal skills and more positive attitudes to learning over extended periods and in ways that are difficult to achieve back in school. Yet there is so much more we could do!’

David Loomes

Head Teacher, South Hetton Primary
School



Recommendations

- School control of funding
- Staff freedom to design curriculum and pedagogy
- Inspection and explicit support
- Funding for infrastructure
- Include in ITE
- Leadership from the head and senior team
- Partnership internally
Partnership externally with other schools
- Long term commitment
- Entitlement and integration
- Thematic curriculum
- Evidence based

‘Next’ Practice



- The **integration** of the experiences with the curriculum and the life of the school as an **entitlement** for all students and so offered as part of the school day or week
- A **progressive** programme with a sequence of co-ordinated learning experiences from age 4 to 18
- A programme offering a **wide range of learning experiences**
- A strong commitment to active **student involvement** in the planning, provision and evaluation of the programmes.



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