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Teach on the beach within reach: The challenges of, and opportunities for creating place-responsive activities for primary aged children in an area of urban deprivation in the UK

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A focus on place-based, experiential outdoor learning provides opportunities to inspire children and young people about their environment and local community towards increased place identity and place-responsiveness. In the urban borough of Barrow-in-Furness, on the coast of North West England, learners value their local environment, yet as an area within the 10% most deprived areas nationally, there are considerable social and economic challenges and barriers to accessing it and exploring its affordances.

To address these challenges, central government funding and planning permission has been granted for a Hub with an environmental education centre close to the beach nearby at Earnse Bay ‘to connect people to open spaces, nature and education’. This presentation will outline a project developing ‘Learning Naturally’ activities based at the Hub for 4-11-year-olds to engage them in place-responsive outdoor learning and to explore the human and more-than-human affordances of that place through a thematic framework with the cross-cutting themes of wellbeing, sustainability and taking action, special Earnse and safety on the shore. It will reflect on the process by which the curriculum developers created exciting learning opportunities, highlighting the special and often unique affordances of that place and responded to stakeholders, including listening to the voices of children and teachers who experienced the activities. It will also describe ways in which the activities plan supports children and young people to become active citizens in their communities for a sustainable future.