

IMPACT REPORT 2020



WELCOME TO OUR 2020 IMPACT REPORT

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Following on from the reversal of the decision to close Blairvadach Outdoor Education Centre on 5th March 2020, the Blairvadach team demonstrated incredible resilience and took the lead in reacting to the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Blairvadach staff, convinced of the positive part that getting outdoors could play in coping with and recovering from the challenges that Glasgow's citizens would face, set about redesigning their Outdoor Education programmes. The impact of Covid-19 has been particularly hard on young people and the positive benefits of the outdoors for young people are more important now than ever. Worries about their families and months spent isolated from their friends have increased mental health challenges, stress and loneliness. Blairvadach is ready to resume residential educational trips as soon as the Scottish Government deems that it is safe to do so.

As soon as residential trips were stopped in March 2020, the Blairvadach staff quickly created high quality resources to support home learning. Whilst constantly monitoring and reacting to Scottish Government guidance, Blairvadach produced risk assessments and introduced control measures and operating procedures that minimised risk to staff and participants to facilitate continued service delivery. From delivering outdoor learning sessions in "Hub Schools", training teaching staff online, running short residentials for care experienced young people through to multi-day outdoor education courses, Blairvadach has continued to serve the people of Glasgow. Blairvadach's innovative work was lauded by Education Scotland and Scottish Government and shared as an exemplar of how other local authorities could be delivering outdoor education programmes. Once again cementing Glasgow's commitment to providing a broad general education.

This report will showcase the breadth and depth of the work achieved throughout the pandemic and demonstrate our positive impact on Glasgow's young people. We have measured and evaluated our impact through [staff feedback](#), [school feedback](#), [online surveys](#) and internal monitoring. The City of Glasgow continues to benefit from a skilled, knowledgeable and motivated workforce who take pride in their service and continue to deliver sector leading outdoor education programmes. All aspects of Blairvadach's service provision are currently being reviewed to ensure that future generations of Glasgow's pupils benefit from these unique educational experiences.

I hope you enjoy reading our report and if you have any questions, suggestions or offers of support, please contact myself.

Neil Wightwick

Neil Wightwick, Head of Establishment

CHANGING NORMS IN 2020

The Global Pandemic prevented residential visits for schools taking place. As the pandemic progressed it was decided that Blairvadach would not plan to offer residential courses to schools until August 2021. This decision enabled a focus on alternative provision which would utilise the service resources to benefit Glasgow's young people.

Although the replacement programmes were very much welcomed, 2011 pupils from 71 schools missed out on a residential experience. Although a proportion of those young people did receive an alternative non-residential programme the outcome of these courses did not have the same impact as a residential. Immersive residential experiences provide new contexts and add relevance to school-based learning, that greatly enhance positive changes, benefits and outcomes making them more long-lived. Young people enjoy challenging and adventurous activities shared with their peers. This results in improved confidence, self-perception, self-belief, and positive peer relationships, as well as understanding and respect for our environment.

Residential outdoor education contributes to narrowing the attainment gap in our society. Our specialist outdoor educators create spaces for our young people to build stronger relationships, develop resilience and re-imagine society that is stronger and fairer; one that truly values nature and our environment, and one that is sustainable to benefit future generations.

New courses were developed for the summer holidays and term time weekends which planned to facilitate family-based courses at the residential centre. Families were highlighted by the schools as those who would most benefit from such an experience and the schools would fund the programme. These were planned for the summer holidays and weekends during August and September. However, a change in guidance from Scottish Government prevented these going ahead.



Blairvadach staff were constantly working to develop new ways of engaging Glasgow's young people both at home & Hub Schools during lockdown and at school in Recovery Phase 3.



Blairvadach Management Team created, adapted and re-wrote working policies & practices to ensure staff had a safe method of working with groups.

The route to recovery was not clear, planned activities were adapted to changing guidance on a regular basis.



In 2020

↓ 75% = 2011

allocated residentials were cancelled due to Covid-19.

Pupils missed out on a residential experience.

This equates to **6741** lost residential activity days.



↑ 76%

Increase in fuel / transport costs (due to more journeys & inability for schools to share transport).

↓ 66% Less contact time per day compared to residential visits.

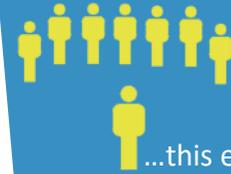


THE YEAR IN NUMBERS



1068

Pupils benefited from our alternative provision...



...this equals

4389

face to face activity days between August & December 2020...

...assisting the recovery phase of

55

teaching establishments.



During the school summer holidays

63

care experienced young people...

...from

10

different houses...



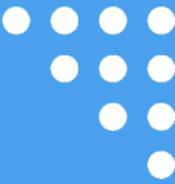
...experienced a total of

189

activity days on our summer residential.



ONLINE IMPACT



Over 1 Million (1.12M) Impressions

(The number of times content from or about us entered a person's screen.)

twitter from **1357** tweets & **2737** followers.



Facebook 159,708 Impressions

from **304** posts & **933** followers.

YouTube

43,122 Impressions

from **138** videos uploaded,

81 subscribers, **207** hours watch time.



2020 AT A GLANCE

KEY: Planning & Preparation... → Active / Complete.

Delivered outdoor learning in 'Hub Schools'

Developed and produced an online outdoor learning programme - available as a home learning resource from May 2020²

Create orienteering maps for all school grounds in Glasgow City Council and a resource pack for teachers³

Teacher CPD webinar⁴

Develop and deliver an alternative to residential experiences.⁵

Review & improve alternative.¹²

Support care experienced young people.⁶

Developed and produced a '30 Day Outdoor Learning Challenge'.⁷

Embed instructors in schools to assist learning outdoors.⁸

Blairvadach's City Centre facility continued to operate.⁹

Embed instructors into Enhanced Nurture Units.¹⁰

Production of short video resources 'Blairvadach Bytes'.¹¹

Mar-20 Apr-20 May-20 Jun-20 Jul-20 Aug-20 Sep-20 Oct-20 Nov-20 Dec-21 Jan-21 Feb-21 Mar-21 Apr-21 Ongoing

Scotland goes into lockdown.

Scottish Government issue guidance on home learning.

Education Services Framework for Recovery, Resilience and Re-connection (RRR2020).

Pupils return to school.

Scottish Government publish updated schools guidance.

Regulations preventing people who live in a Level 3 or Level 4 area from travelling outside their local authority except for an essential purpose come into force.

Scotland goes into lockdown again.

P1-3 & some secondary pupils return to school.

P4-7 & more secondary pupils return to school.

Expected return to school for all pupils.

2020 IN DETAIL *The numbered list items below relate to the progress arrows on the previous page.*

When lockdown was introduced in March 2020, many of Blairvadach's school bookings were cancelled. However, the Centre recognised the possibilities for outdoor learning to play a strong role in the education recovery programme.

Existing resources were quickly repurposed to:

1. Deliver outdoor learning in the 'Hub Schools' to the children of key workers and most vulnerable.
2. Develop an online outdoor learning programme which was used as a home learning resource: www.blairvadach.org.uk/Pages/View/22.
3. Create orienteering maps for all school grounds in Glasgow City Council and a resource pack for teachers: www.blairvadach.org.uk/Pages/View/23.
These types of resources have proved invaluable for teachers who are being encouraged to take their learning outdoors whenever possible.
4. Create an online course to assist teachers who were new to taking their learning outdoors. This provided practical advice for taking the curriculum outdoors and how to operate in a COVID safe way. A video of this course can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/q2gtKmwzqPc>.
5. Develop an alternative to residential experiences. Each school that was booked now experiences a week-long blended outdoor education experience based in their school, local park and two days at the Outdoor Education Centre. This progressive course focuses on resilience, teamwork and behaviour as part of GCC's Education Recovery Programme.
6. Work in partnership with Glasgow City Council Social Work to support young people in the care system. This facilitated getting young people out of their normal environment, to work on a residential personal and social development programme using different outdoor activities as the vehicle. This programme proved hugely successful for the mental wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable young people in society.
7. Create a "30 Day Outdoor Learning Challenge". This resource is aimed at Glasgow Schools but is open to all online. Each day, for 30 days a new curriculum based outdoor learning challenge was released alongside a resource card and video. Hundreds of schools have accessed the resource to enhance the in-school learning.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ediRQiKsc_8.
8. Embed instructors in schools to assist with taking learning outdoors, in the playground and local parks.
9. The City Centre facility at Pinkston has continued to operate through small adjustments to the programme structure. Schools have found this resource invaluable when many other schools education trips could not go ahead.
10. Embed instructors into Enhanced Nurture Units in schools to introduce some of the least engaged young people to an alternative educational programme.
11. Production of short video resources and information cards sharing outdoor learning topics for schools, parents and groups to engage with. We called this Blairvadach Bytes and they are available here: www.blairvadach.org.uk/Pages/View/33.
12. During the lockdown in the first quarter of 2021 we took the opportunity to review and improve our alternative provision for the summer term. It is hoped that we will be able to return to residential provision after the summer holidays.

The demand for the service remains extremely high (even in the COVID crisis) and each facility is fully booked until June 2022. The Centre has continued to operate throughout the COVID 19 crisis within the national scientific guidance to support the young people of Glasgow.

FEEDBACK FROM SCHOOL STAFF

Every year we ask for feedback from the school staff who have accompanied their pupils to both our residential outdoor education centre, and the city-centre facility. This year we've asked for the same feedback regarding the alternative provision that we put in place from August to December 2020.

Personal & Social Development:

- Enjoyed participating in the outdoor activity sessions
- Adopted a positive attitude to challenge and adventure - Excellent
- Personal confidence gained - Excellent
- Improved self esteem - Excellent
- Development of self awareness - Excellent
- Development of social skills - Excellent
- Appreciation of their contributions and achievements - Excellent
- Appreciation of others contributions and achievements – Excellent

100% rated these either very good or excellent.



"Fantastic blended approach but - Residential would be the preferred choice - the values this brings are immeasurable"

"Blairvadach staff were able to develop these life skills in the pupils extremely well."



Personal Qualities & Life Skills, developing & extending their use of:

- Initiative
- Self reliance
- Perseverance
- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Understanding risk

91% rated either very good or excellent.

FEEDBACK FROM SCHOOL STAFF (CONTINUED)



"The children particularly enjoyed the canoeing at the Firhill Basin and the Hill Walk and were surprised that they could take part in these activities so close to home."

Health & Wellbeing, Appreciating the benefits of:

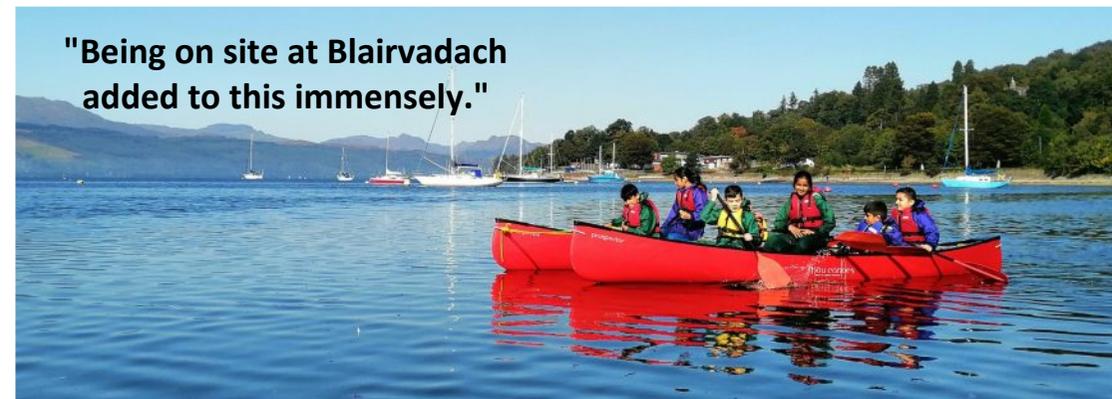
- Physical fitness
- Participation in healthy
- leisure activities
- Acquiring and developing a range of skills in outdoor activities

94% rated either very good or excellent.

Environmental Awareness

- Expressed an interest in the natural environment
- Understanding the importance of conservation
- Demonstrating responsible behaviour in the outdoors
- Understanding the impact of humans on the natural environment

95% rated these either good, very good or excellent.



"Being on site at Blairvadach added to this immensely."



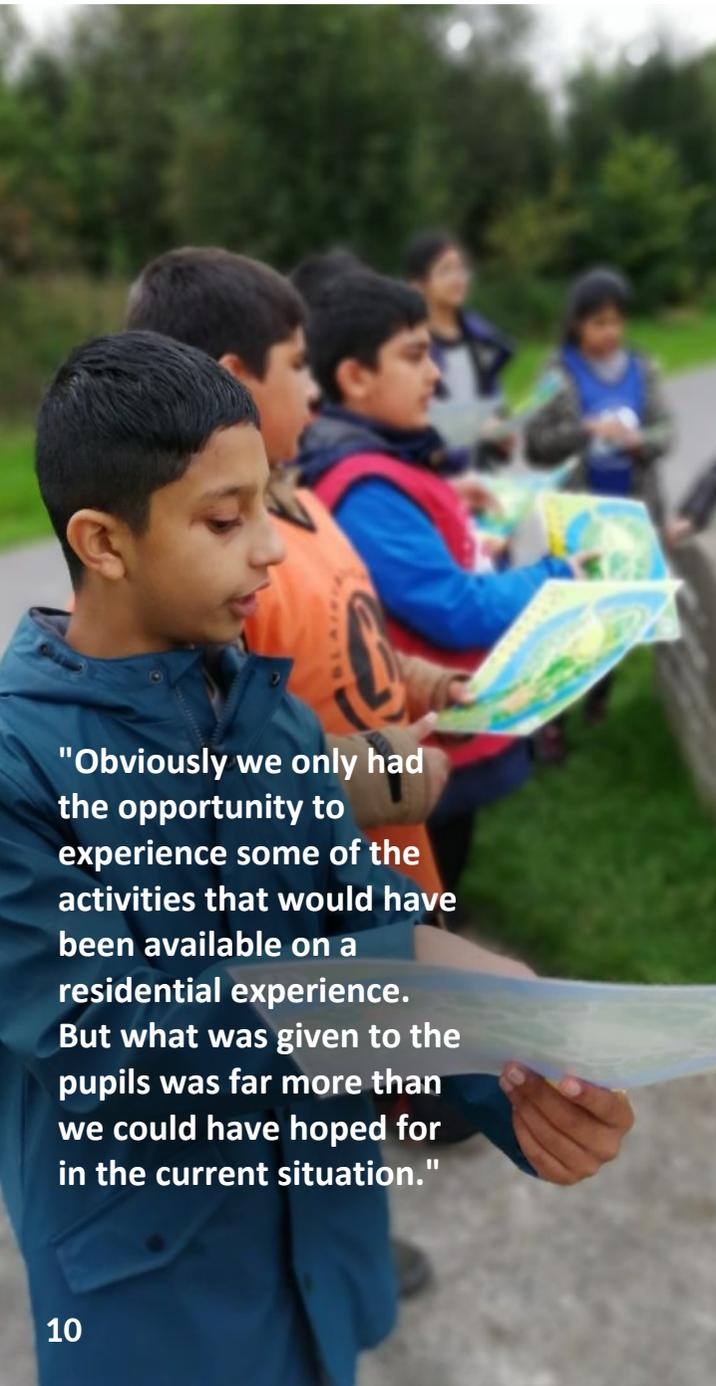
"Again, time constrictions meant that there were less opportunities for the Blairvadach team to make even more of an impact here."

Motivation for Learning

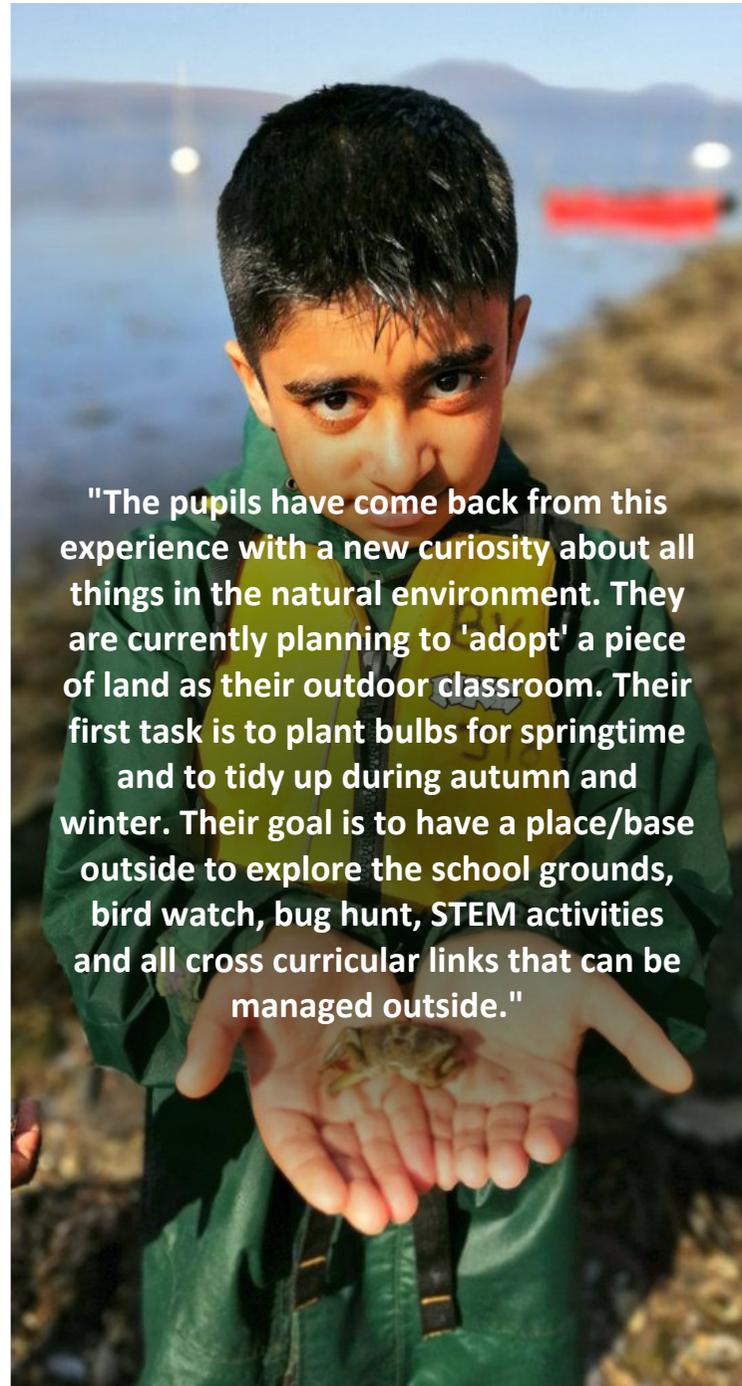
- An increased motivation and appetite for learning
- Willingness to engage in new and varied subjects
- A desire to question and enquire regarding their new discoveries

100% rated these either good, very good or excellent.

FEEDBACK FROM SCHOOL STAFF (CONTINUED)



"Obviously we only had the opportunity to experience some of the activities that would have been available on a residential experience. But what was given to the pupils was far more than we could have hoped for in the current situation."



"The pupils have come back from this experience with a new curiosity about all things in the natural environment. They are currently planning to 'adopt' a piece of land as their outdoor classroom. Their first task is to plant bulbs for springtime and to tidy up during autumn and winter. Their goal is to have a place/base outside to explore the school grounds, bird watch, bug hunt, STEM activities and all cross curricular links that can be managed outside."



"The programme we undertook was ideal under the circumstances. It was great to work with the instructors in local spaces. The activities were ones that we would struggle to offer the children due to lack of expertise and equipment."

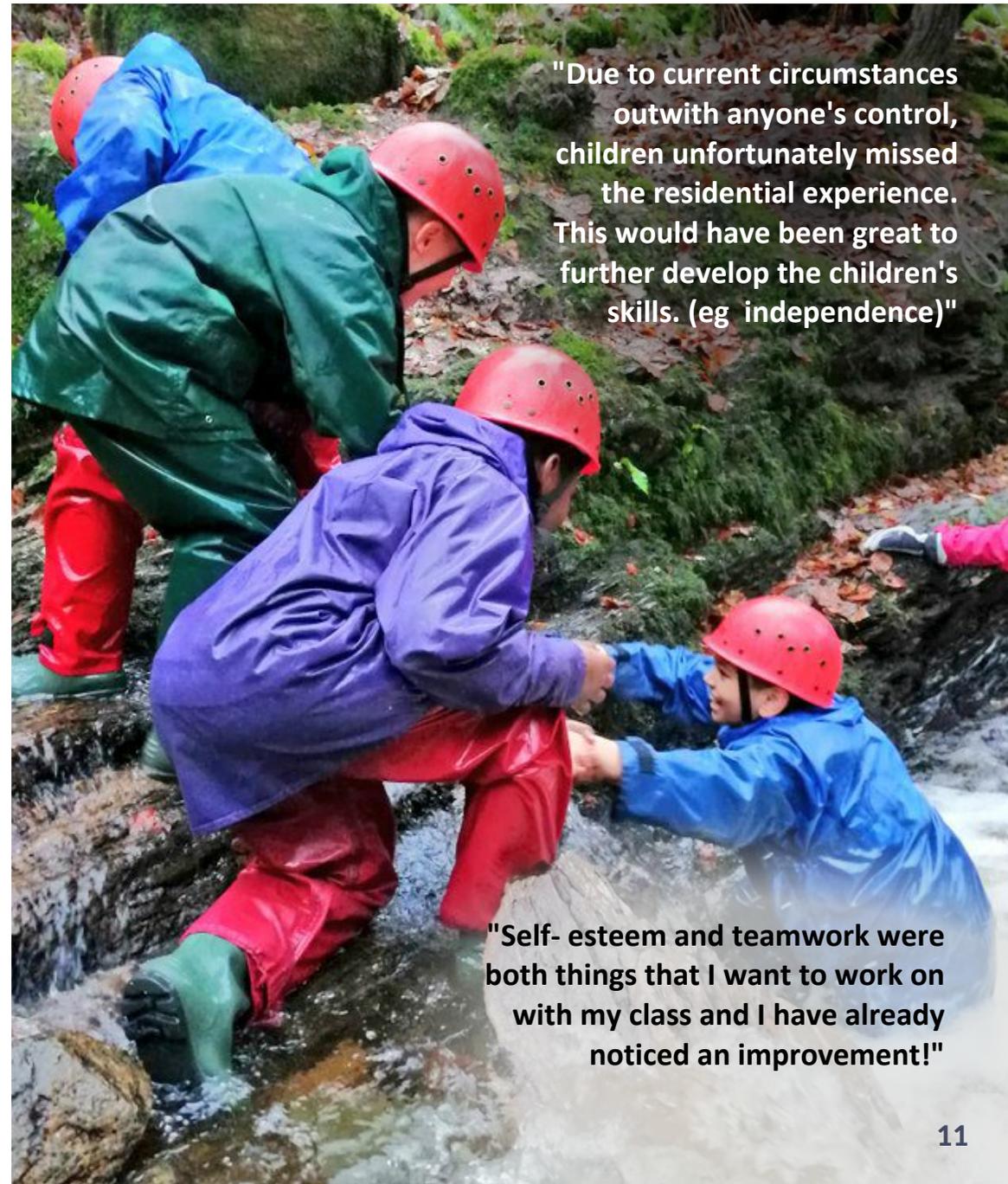
FEEDBACK FROM SCHOOL STAFF (CONTINUED)



"Health and Safety was adhered to at all times with regards to the current unprecedented times we are all experiencing"



"It was excellent example of blended learning to accommodate a need in times where the residential experience wasn't possible - well done."



"Due to current circumstances outwith anyone's control, children unfortunately missed the residential experience. This would have been great to further develop the children's skills. (eg independence)"

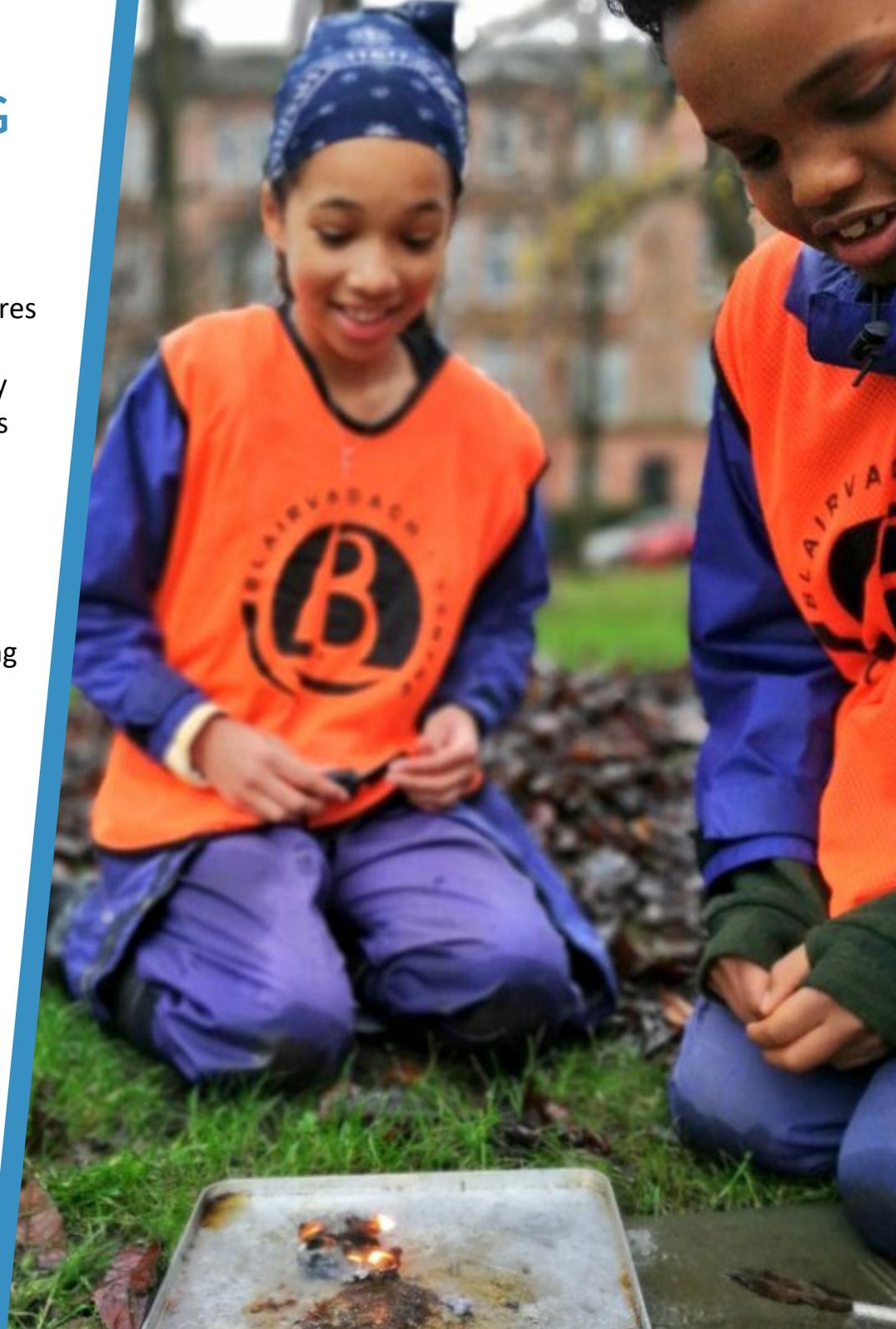
"Self- esteem and teamwork were both things that I want to work on with my class and I have already noticed an improvement!"

SUPPORTING OUTDOOR LEARNING



Head of Establishment for Blairvadach, Neil Wightwick, led, attended and contributed to a number of strategic forums including the Association Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (AHOEC), Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE), Scottish Government Outdoor Education Recovery Group and Scottish Outdoor Consortium (SOC). By participating in forums such as these, Glasgow City Council is best placed, through partnership working to influence the shaping of the outdoor learning landscape to benefit Glasgow's citizens.

This year has been particularly significant to ensuring a fragile residential sector remains intact for future generations of Glasgow pupils and making sure that outdoor learning continues to be a significant part of Education Services Framework for Recovery, Resilience and Re-connection (RRR2020). In a number of these forums Blairvadach's contribution to this framework, largely in Recovery Phase 3, was used as an exemplar on how other authorities and organisations could increase their own impact. In addition, the groups are continually driving forward outdoor learning as part of future education and health strategy.



SUMMARY & FUTURE



In early 2020, a decision to close the residential centre was reversed and a working group came together to research and deliver a new 'sustainable' operating model.

This process has been delayed considerably due to COVID and the work is on-going. A new operating structure is taking shape with a likely implementation date of August 2021.



This year, like no other, the team at Blairvadach have demonstrated their ability to adapt and overcome in order to deliver the best service and value for Glasgow's citizens. We are very proud of our achievements in contributing to Glasgow's Education Services 'RRR2020'.

As demonstrated by the feedback from our 'Blairvadach Future Options Consultation', the demand for our core residential experience remains a priority for our participants. We very much look forward to opening this part of the facility as soon as conditions allow.

Thank you to all our stakeholders, pupils, parents, employees and teachers for their support this year. We look forward to working with you in the future.





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