

Blairvadach Outdoor Education Services



Impact Report 2019/2020



Our year, at a glance...



14190

Student Days



134

Schools Attended



368

Free Places Delivered



3309

Glasgow Pupils Subsidised



100%

School Objectives Met

School objectives included:

- To provide children with a positive and educational outdoor experience which would develop their **resilience, self esteem and confidence**. I believe all were achieved. 16/03/20
- The development of **teamwork, social skills, resilience**, and a **growth mindset**. 02/12/19
- Offering our children **opportunities they are unlikely to have within their family settings** and that may spark interest for many years. Enabling our children to challenge themselves physically and emotionally to **build resilience and self belief**. Offering our children different **positive role models** and situations in which they are expected to **take on more and different responsibilities that transfer back home**. 18/11/19
- To offer the children an **outdoor experience that is not easily accessible to them within their locale**. To give the P7 children a **team building and confidence building** experience before going to secondary. 28/05/19



Introduction

The reach of Blairvadach Services has continued to grow over the past 12 months, we are now connecting with, and having a positive impact on, more of Glasgow's young people than ever before.

The Blairvadach residential centre continues to be booked 7 days a week during term time, up to two years ahead. The school holiday periods deliver a level of cost recovery that is always balanced against core objectives to serve the people of Glasgow and ensuring the centre is occupied. During 2019-20 period the centre only had 4 unsold weekends. All weekdays, except Christmas, were occupied.

The Pinkston Basin service continues to grow as a key resource for Glasgow Pupils to access outdoor education through the John Muir Award or Paddlesports. The centre has now reached capacity in its current format and alternative models are being explored to benefit Glasgow's young people. The inner-city base has proved to be a successful location for further increasing outdoor learning capacity through the delivery of professional development for teachers and support staff.

Through robust recruitment and CPD processes we continue to benefit from a skilled, knowledgeable and motivated workforce who take pride in their service and continue to deliver sector leading outdoor education programmes.

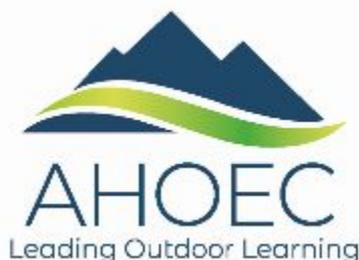
However, this report has been delivered against a tumultuous backdrop of closure threats and the COVID19 crisis. In the coming months we will be reviewing all aspects of service provision to ensure that future generations of Glasgow pupils do not miss out these unique educational experiences.

The report will showcase the breadth and depth of the work achieved and demonstrate our positive impact on Glasgow's young people. We have measured and evaluated our impact through staff feedback, pupil feedback, online surveys and internal monitoring.

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

Neil Wightwick
Head of Centre

Email: nwightwick@blairvadach.org.uk





Glasgow cares for its young people by subsidising places at Blairvadach

During term time we work **predominantly** with Glasgow City Council Schools.

In this financial year, **3309 Pupils from Glasgow City Council schools accessed a Blairvadach experience on a subsidised rate.** By reducing the cost barrier to our service we continue to be **as inclusive as possible.** Examples of how this subsidy is applied:

1. Free weekends: Every year Blairvadach facilitates 16 free weekends to schools ranked highest on the SIMD.
2. Schools accessing courses at Pinkston Basin during school term time can receive up to 40% subsidy for their pupils.
3. Our **residential courses provide a subsidy for all Glasgow School pupils** who attend during mid week term time.



Primary Schools

Our residential personal and social development programme focuses on **behaviour, effort, responsibility and teamwork.**

Our courses at the Pinkston Basin facilitate the John Muir and National Paddlesports Awards.

In 2019/20 we delivered 90 courses to 2524 pupils from this sector.



Secondary Schools

Our Secondary programme is tailored to skills acquisition but as with all adventurous education, the personal and social development aspects are inherent.

In addition the centre is a popular location for study weekends.

In 2019/20 we delivered 25 courses to 584 pupils in this sector.



Additional Support for Learning

Our ASL mid week programme utilises a staged build up for participants. This has improved accessibility for young people by reducing the stress and anxiety around such an experience.

In 2019/20 we delivered 24 courses to 201 pupils in this sector.



Subsidy Rates

Duration / Cost	Public Rate	GCC	GCC FSM/CA
5 day 4 nights	£380 pp	£200 pp	£100 pp
4 day 3 night	£304 pp	£160 pp	£80 pp
3 day 2 night	£228 pp	£120 pp	£60 pp

GCC = Standard Glasgow City Council Subsidised Rate
GCC FSM/CA = Glasgow Pupils in receipt of free school meals and / or clothing allowance

Feedback from visiting staff



We care about the experience we deliver and are constantly striving to improve our service for the benefit of Glasgow Pupils & Staff. We like to hear to all comments from visitors and act on ideas for improvement wherever possible.

At the end of every course we send out a survey form to the visiting staff who came with the pupils asking for feedback on a variety of topics. We are lucky to get a very high response rate and have included a sample of the range of responses here.



Personal & Social Development

The children have had an absolutely fantastic residential experience at Blairvadach. They have **grown in confidence, challenged themselves, been resilient** and I can see that they are really **proud of their achievements**. The team work demonstrated by the children has been lovely to witness and the opportunities and activities at Blairvadach have **fostered their relationships**; looking out for each other with **kindness, supporting and encouraging** each other. The staff working with the children have been superb, really knowledgeable and great at putting the children at ease when they were anxious or nervous about a particular activity and encouraging them to **achieve their potential**. The **facilities** have been to a **high standard, clean and tidy**. I am really impressed with the routines of the centre, the washing for the children and meal times etc have all been extremely well organised.

14/02/2020



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Inclusion

As many of our pupils live in high flats and SIMD 1-2 (social index of multiple deprivation), **the programme allowed them to experience activities that were completely new to them to broaden their horizons.**

13/09/2019

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Personal Qualities & Life Skills

(Initiative, Self reliance, Perseverance, Communication, Problem Solving, Leadership, Teamwork, Understanding risk)

The children had many opportunities to **communicate** and **work together to solve problems** and **achieve goals**. Certain children naturally take on a leading role but these activities encouraged all children to **make decisions, encourage others** and share ideas. The instructors were realistic in imparting 'natural consequences', which encouraged the children to **manage risk more effectively**. E.g. "what happens if we fall in the water?" - you get wet, "what happens if I fall off?" - you get hurt. This also encouraged more **independent responses** when children faced these things and helped **build their resilience**.

02/09/2019

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Health & Wellbeing

Many of our children simply would not have the chance to take part in outdoor activities with their families so **this may be the time when they see what they can actually do, and start to develop an interest that could be life-long.**

15/04/2019

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The Blairvadach Programme

Flexibility of the programme is a strength as it enables us to **better meet the needs of the children** and **prioritise what will be the best activities.**

09/09/2019

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Motivation for Learning

The children were excited to find out what their next activity involved. They **asked lots of questions to help them visualise and understand** what they would be doing, and this assisted them in effectively **managing risk and setting challenges** and limits for themselves. One child was initially hesitant and opted not to do paddlesports. As they **built a trusting relationship** with their group and instructor, they **felt safer** and, ultimately, **requested to join in** with water activities. This was a **huge accomplishment** for the child and will hopefully allow them to be more adventurous in future activities.

02/09/2019

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The Blairvadach Team

Blairvadach staff are just second to none. It has been a joy to see the impact of your hard work on the young people, and how they responded to it. Even as an adult, I **have learned and benefited from the experience & have taken on board things on a professional level to implement in my own teaching.** Thank you so much.

15/11/2019

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STEM Learning

The **STEM learning** that went on in several activities **was brilliant** from knowing the elements of **fire in bushcraft**, to **geology in the gorge walk** to **eco systems and plant life in the woods**.

13/05/2019



The Residential Experience

The children benefited from high structure with a good balance of free time. The children were given **independence** in looking after themselves which really allowed them to begin to **build life skills**. Evening activities were **fun and engaging**. Staff were extremely helpful and friendly. The range of activities was super, the children's interest was sustained the entire time. The **mix of on and off-site activities allowed for a richer experience for the children**. Instructors were wonderful and made the children **feel safe and valued**. They gave the children plenty of **freedom to explore** and were very much led by their interests. The equipment was **safe and comfortable** for the children and the **drying room/changing rooms** were great for getting sorted before activities. The **laundry** was a great addition to the experience and encouraged conversation about **looking after belongings**. Overall, **the standard of this trip was impressive**.

02/09/2019



ASL Provision

The [ASL] model of the **pre-visit to Blairvadach**, instructors visiting then **3 night stay** was **hugely successful**. I could not praise the quality of the instructors highly enough. **We brought a challenging group with a range of needs and the week ran perfectly**.

26/08/2019



“ Environmental Awareness

The children love the environment surrounding the centre and took a great deal of interest in the wildlife they encountered. They had productive conversations with staff members regarding conservation and the environment.

14/02/2020

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“ Health & Wellbeing

The residential aspect allows for the young people to develop social and life skills that isn't achievable within the classroom.

25/02/2020

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“ John Muir Award

The children have since spoken very passionately about how they can be more responsible regarding their environment and have discussed their desire to implement initiatives in school.

07/01/2020

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“ The Residential Programme

Evening programmes were well suited and engaging. I particularly liked that the children were to complete portfolios to document their week and to reflect on their day, achievements and possible challenges for the next day. Children had a wide breadth of learning experiences throughout the week which children can apply in their day to day lives.

27/11/2019

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Interdisciplinary Learning & Teaching

The children were able to experience taking responsibility in a wide variety of ways, from climbing to setting tables!

15/04/2019

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Interdisciplinary Learning & Teaching

A residential visit to Blairvadach links to many different areas of Curriculum for Excellence and aspects of the four capacities with children experiencing a new place, developing relationships and challenging themselves; all important aspects of becoming effective contributors, responsible citizens, confident individuals and successful learners.

Embedded into the experiences for children and teachers are topics such as climate change, sustainable development, global citizenship, biodiversity and pollution.

Residential visits are also a great way to develop confidence and independence and are very beneficial to P7- S1 transition.

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Interdisciplinary Learning & Teaching

As always, some of our less academic children shone during the week and showed really high levels of motivation.

The instructors constantly took time to explore the children's questions with lots of genuine Inter-Disciplinary Learning links being made.

18/11/2019

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Opportunities

Our aim is for Glasgow City Council to deliver **high quality Outdoor Learning** at various periods during a young persons development.

We see the **Blairvadach residential provision** as a **key component** of the many ways that young people will access Outdoor Learning through their education. The **residential experience builds on previous experiences** and **prepares young people for the next stage in their learning journey.**

By **developing clear pathways** and a Glasgow City Council **strategy for Outdoor Learning**, our schools **can select** at which point and at which time they would like to access our services and **develop outcomes specifically for their situation or cohort.**

We are **passionate about 'lifelong' learning** and provide a **broad scope of training opportunities** for **adults and young people.** The instructional team at Blairvadach are **highly skilled, knowledgeable and qualified in a range of disciplines.** By sharing these skills, knowledge and experiences with school staff through **national and in-house courses** we are continually **building the capacity for outdoor learning within the city.**





Summary

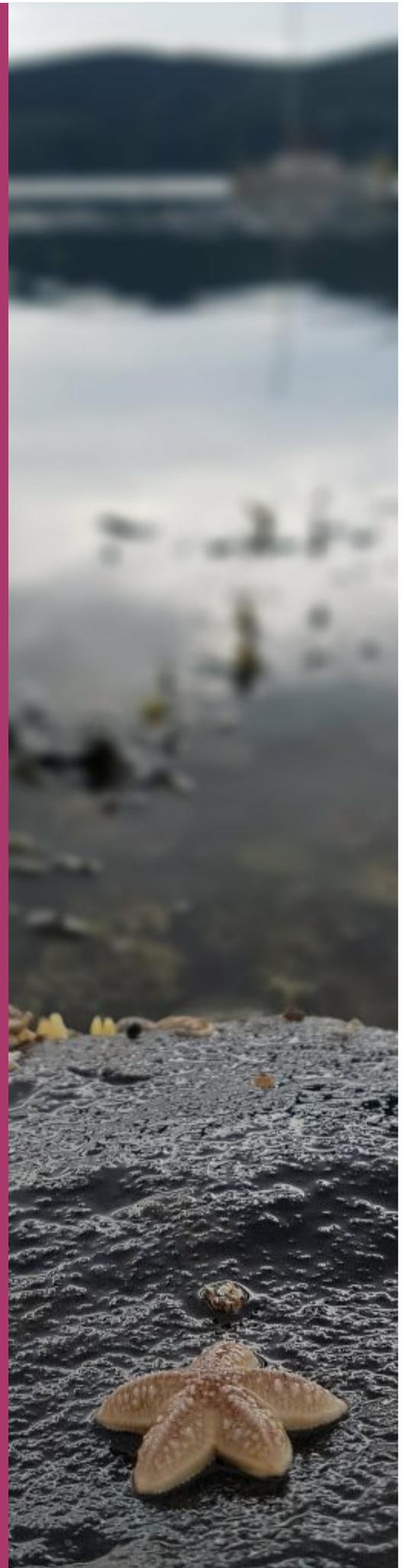
Our results, feedback and evidence show that the Blairvadach experiences can have an immediate, positive and long lasting impact on the young people we work with. Only by the unique way that the service is funded can we reach such a wide ranging cross section of the Glasgow community. We have been able to demonstrate through our residential and outreach provision that where positive, planned and engaging learning opportunities are presented, young people grow in confidence, belief, attainment and become enthusiastic learners.

In February 2020 Blairvadach was saved from the threat of closure. We must now review the operation and strategy to ensure that the service is sustainable for Glasgow City Council. A working group is committed to evaluating all options with a view to ensuring Blairvadach can continue to serve the young people of Glasgow with the inclusive, flexible and quality Outdoor Learning experiences & outcomes that they deserve.

Blairvadach Centre has been effected the same as schools with the COVID-19 pandemic and our team have taken the opportunity to further develop our resources and prepare for our first groups returning.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

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Occupancy levels 2012 - 2020

