



The National Archives

Press release

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THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AWARDED LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM QUALITY BADGE

The National Archives is one of the first organisations in the country to be awarded the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, recognising it as a provider of quality, safely managed educational experiences for young people.

The Quality Badge is a new scheme, combining for the first time learning and safety into one easily recognisable badge for all organisations providing learning outside the classroom experiences.

Andrew Payne, head of education and outreach at The National Archives, said “I am immensely proud of The National Archives being awarded the Quality Badge. It is a real stamp of approval that the activities we offer young people are recognised in this way. We have always worked closely with local schools and youth groups to provide quality learning in a safe environment. We know that children really benefit from these important experiences and it’s great to have all our hard work recognised in this way.”

The Quality Badge was developed as part of the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, a national initiative to ensure young people are given more opportunities to have these experiences as part of the curriculum. The Quality Badge scheme is part of the Government’s £4.5m Out and About package which, in addition to the badges,

provides guidance and information to teachers on how to plan and organise high quality activities. The badge is designed to make it easier for teachers to identify providers of quality educational visits. Organisations will display the badge to show schools that their venue has met required standards, so teachers do not need to carry out their own risk or quality assessments.

Ed Balls, Secretary of State Children, Schools and Families, said:

“Educational visits are among the most memorable experiences in a child’s school life. Quality Badges offer teachers a guarantee that not only is a venue providing the sort of educational value that they can build on in class long after the visit but they also have the appropriate risk management structures in place.

“It is a significant victory in our battle to move away from the misguided perception that learning outside the classroom is a potential minefield for teachers. I want to see teachers using Quality Badges as a practical decision making tool. It should ensure that many more young people have memorable, exciting and valuable learning outside the classroom experiences. I congratulate The National Archives on being awarded the badge.”

The Quality Badge is available to large and small organisations providing quality learning outside the classroom experiences and managing risk effectively. Organisations already awarded the badge include museums, adventurous activity and field study centres, places of worship, art galleries, visitor attractions and farms, with many more starting to apply.

The Quality Badge was developed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. Badges are awarded by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom.

For more information about the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, please visit www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk

Notes to Editors

The Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto was launched in November 2006, making eight specific pledges to expand access to educational opportunities outside the classroom for all 0 to 19 year olds.

The **Quality Badge** brings together a number of existing schemes that cover safety primarily; puts the emphasis on the quality of teaching and learning provided (of which risk management is a part); and offers a quality standard for sectors that hitherto have not had a scheme at all (e.g. museums and galleries, field study centres). The first badges were awarded in January 2009, with the new Council for the Learning Outside the Classroom acting as the awarding body. Organisations can register online at: www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/

The Quality Badge is available to all organisations providing learning outside the classroom experiences. There are two routes to the Quality Badge – the route an organisation takes to achieve the Quality Badge will be determined by the degree of risk management required to manage the activities offered..

Route 1 is for those organisations whose activities are considered relatively low-risk, such as environmental centres, art galleries, museums, visitor attractions and places of worship. Organisations applying through Route 1 will need to complete an online Self Evaluation Form to demonstrate that they have met a set of quality indicators; a sample of organisations will receive a quality assurance visit from a Quality Badge assessor.

Route 2 is for those organisations whose activities require a degree of technical knowledge and experience that are beyond the lay person, such as ensuring children are operating safely on a high ropes course, around livestock and farming equipment, or when entering rivers to make measurements. Residential and overseas visits are also included in Route 2, due to the unique risk management issues they present to teachers.

Providers proceeding through Route 2 must meet the same quality criteria as Route 1, but will also be assessed by the relevant awarding body. This is to ensure that they meet the quality indicators and have adequate safety management systems in place. There are five Route 2 awarding bodies: Access to Farms (ATF); Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee (AAIAC); Field Studies Council (FSC); School Travel Forum (STF); and Expedition Providers Association (EPA)

In October 2008 an Out and About package was launched to help teachers integrate more learning outside the classroom into the curriculum. Including advice, guidance, resources and training modules to support schools, colleges, early years' providers and youth groups provide learning outside the classroom opportunities. It is available at www.lotc.org.uk. The package aims to breakdown barriers to pupils getting out and about – with 'how to' guidance, including planning learning into the curriculum and information on where to go and who can help.

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom is to be launched in March 2009.