Project summary
We have looked at the impacts of ‘Learning Outside the Classroom’ on the teaching and learning of all children in school. We made the most of opportunities to use resources from the world outside to enhance the children’s understanding of the curriculum, making it more meaningful and relevant to children within school.

Aspect of Every Child Matters addressed:
- Be healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

What were you hoping to achieve?
We hoped to raise standards and improve pupils’ personal, social and emotional development by making Learning Outside the Classroom an integral part of curriculum planning. We attempted to look at the impacts of LOtC on the Learning, Teaching and Understanding of children in school. Not just in the measurable educational sense but also the learning of the child in the widest sense.

How did you identify the need for this practice?
Our vision is to engage and enthuse our pupils by bringing the curriculum to life and moving away from the classroom as being the only space for learning. As a school we feel 'every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability and circumstances'.
We also recognise the importance of developing independent learners, children who have the skills to investigate research and learn on their own.
As we became more familiar using the QCA units, staff enhanced the units by enhancing children's experiences. This has led to the creative, imaginative and exciting curriculum the children experience today.
What did you do?

We recognise the world outside the classroom is a resource that should be used to enhance the learning and understanding of different areas of the curriculum. As a school, we have tried to embrace 'Learning Outside the Classroom' and create as many opportunities for experiences outside of the classroom for children in all areas of the curriculum. We feel that the learning outside the classroom manifesto allows children to develop as individuals who are aware of the world around them and their place in this world.

As a school we have embraced the manifesto, enhancing children's knowledge and understanding of new topics by using resources, expertise and hands on approach from outside the classroom. All members of staff have embraced this as a way of enhancing the curriculum where appropriate. This is a sample of the different opportunities we have undertaken to enhance children’s experiences of different topics in school:

**English:** As a school we invited the poet Ian Bland to work with all the children within school to write different poems. This gave the children the opportunity to see Literacy in action. Year 5/6 travelled to Preston to visit The Charter Theatre to experience a Shakespearean production. This year the children went to see Romeo and Juliet, enhancing the children’s understanding of play scripts and public speaking.

**Maths:** As a school we feel it is important that children understand that maths is a part of life in the world outside the classroom. We invited a mathematician into school to begin one of our special maths days. During these days children experience different situations where maths is used in the world outside the classroom. One of the best examples of enhancing children’s understanding of maths was a Key Stage 1 maths trail, where children solved maths problems using the school grounds.

**Science:** We feel that it is important that children experience science through their own investigation. Learning outside of the classroom gives children this opportunity. Due to the large grounds the school is set in, the staff takes many opportunities to let the children investigate in the safety of the school grounds. The children have used the grounds to find different habitats for different animals, experiment with light and shadows and investigate the effects of exercise on the body amongst other things. During science weeks, help is enlisted from parents and outside agencies to bring science to life. Visitors are able to bring their experiences from the world outside the classroom. We have also developed close links with the local High School. Members of staff have come into school to introduce the children to concepts and ideas that we are not able to show in a Primary School setting.

**Geography:** It is extremely important for children's appreciation of the subject that children have a clear understanding of the world around them. Throughout the children's lives in school we make sure that they are taken out of the classroom and
experience the world nearby. In Key Stage 1 children are taken on woodland nature walks to enhance their understanding of different areas of the curriculum. In key Stage 2, children explore further afield, investigating the beach fronts of Lytham and St Annes and learn about the local area and follow a trail around their local town. Children also have first hand experience of rivers and their properties. Year 5 children visit Waddecar Scout Camp to investigate the River Brock. During the 'Improving the Local Area' topic, Year 4 worked alongside the Wildlife Trust and along with voluntary help from parents created the Willow Tunnel in the Wildlife Garden. The children were involved in all areas of development from the designing to the building and maintenance of the sculpture.

**History:** All members of staff have enlisted the help of experts in History. Children experience the lives of the Tudors and Victorians through specific days where the children dress in authentic clothes and take part in role plays to understand the lives of people in a particular time period. After taking part in these activities, children are left with a clearer understanding of the lives of people in Victorian and Tudor times. The History curriculum is also enhanced by visits to local museums as well as appropriate visitors into school. In Year 3 children visit the Roman Museum at Ribchester. This gives the children an opportunity to see real Roman artifacts and experience what life would have been like in this area during Roman times.

**R.E.:** Regular visits to St Cuthbert’s church give the children an opportunity to experience religion in practice and give a base to their understanding of other faiths. Other visits to places of worship have included the Synagogue in St Annes and the Mosque in Preston. Every Harvest and Easter the whole school walks to St Cuthbert's Church to join in with their celebrations. Education Sunday was led by the children at the local Methodist Church. Reverend Caroline was invited into school to lead the worship in a Key Stage 1 assembly, giving the children the opportunity to experience at first hand a religious service.

**PE:** Children in school have many opportunities to experience different sports through coaching from different experts. The school is part of the SSCO scheme where many opportunities are provided for children to experience different sports. Children of all ages have experienced a wide range of sports including multi skills, speed stacking, tri-golf, tennis, dance and gymnastics.

**Music:** This subject has always been strength of the school. The children benefit from the expertise and experience of many experts in their field. The impacts of these experiences are easy to see and hear when the children perform for the rest of the school and parents and friends in special assemblies. Choral singing is strength within the school and this is thanks to the work of a peripatetic teacher who works regularly alongside all the children to develop their own singing. Children have recently performed at Lytham Hall, singing a variety of pieces to a large audience.

The school has close links with Lytham and St Annes High School Music
ICT: Members of staff use ICT to enhance children's learning and understanding of different topics. The school has recently begun video conferencing with museums and other schools. Teachers and children are able to use the experience and knowledge of experts in particular fields to enhance the children’s understanding of different topics.

On returning from different visits children are often encouraged to create Photo Story or PowerPoint presentations of their experiences. This aids consolidation of what the children have learned.

Art: Children in Key Stage 1 during Friday Favourites walked around the school grounds to collect natural resources. These were then manipulated to produce work in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. The school has attained the Silver Arts Mark Award and we have recently submitted an application for the Gold Arts Mark Award.

Foundation Stage: The Foundation Stage children have access to outdoor facilities for continuous and enhanced provision at all times. This allows the children to experience the world outside the classroom in a safe environment. Children learn through independent exploration and investigation and through guided outdoor activities. An example of this was collecting leaves for counting, building animal homes from natural materials.

The culmination of children's experiences outside of the classroom is Year 6’s educational visit to Winmarleigh. During the course of the week the children work on many different demanding tasks that encourage them to work collaboratively with each other, solve problems and support one another through the new experiences they face. During this week, children have to become independent in preparing themselves for the different tasks they are to complete.

All members of staff have adopted a more creative approach to the planning of the curriculum. This has meant that staff has been able to increase the number of opportunities for the children to experience the curriculum from outside of the classroom.

The school ECO Council is involved in the improvement of the school grounds. The children make decisions as a council as to how they could improve the area. Outside agencies are then invited to come into school to work alongside the children to implement these improvements. Last year the ECO Council were involved in the development of the Wildlife Garden and this year the children planned the location of the pond in this Garden.

Which members of the establishment and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role?

Staff: The staff of the school has been fundamental to the development of Learning Outside of the Classroom. They are aware of the topics they teach within each year
The School Council and ECO Council: The children are involved in decisions that affect the environment and grounds of the school.

The Wildlife Trust: The Wildlife Trust have worked alongside the school ECO Council and Year 4 in the planning and implementation of the improvements to the wildlife garden and tree planting around the school grounds.

Parents: The support of the parents has aided the school to develop the impact of 'Learning Outside the Classroom'. They accompany the children on the visits to comply with Risk Assessment procedures and helped with the digging of the Butterfly garden and the planting of the Willow Tunnel.

St Cuthberts Church: The school has close links with the church. Regular visits are made to the church and from Canon Andrew Clitheroe into school.

SSCO: As part of the SSCO scheme, close links have been made with Lytham St Annes High School and other Primary Schools.

Fylde Borough Council and Lytham in Bloom Society have worked with the ECO Council planting trees within the school grounds.

How has the practice been modified or improved during development?

As the school takes on a more creative approach to the planning and delivery of different topics, opportunities to include out of classroom experiences are included in the curriculum. For example, Year 4 are planning a visit to Blackpool Zoo in the Spring to enhance their understanding of African wildlife covered in their Kenya topic.

Staff will review their creative planning in July 2009 to evaluate the impact on their approach to children's learning. In this process, staff will be able to find further opportunities to include outside agencies/expertise or enhance the children's experiences outside the classroom.

What has been the impact of the project on pupils’ learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?

The impact of 'Learning Outside the Classroom' is difficult to assess in a quantitative measure. It is obvious from observations of children out of the classroom that they are learning from their experiences and they are able to apply these skills to those that take place within the classroom environment. From the experiences the children have outside of the classroom, they are able to apply them to the work carried out in the classroom and therefore benefit from the experience.

'Learning outside the Classroom' links closely with the Every Child Matters Framework:
**Safety:** In all experiences outside of the classroom staff and children are made aware of safety issues. This makes the individual aware of issues that could affect them outside of the school situation. Health and Safety Week reinforces this learning through visits to the Life Education van and to see the fire engine in action.

**Health:** As a healthy school the children are aware of the requirements for healthy living. As part of different science topics nurses, doctors and dentists visit school to enhance the children's learning. As part of Health Week, visits from these professionals provide the children with the knowledge and skills required to keep a healthy lifestyle. During the year 6 week at Winmarleigh the children are active for large amounts of time. They are made aware of the importance of a balanced and healthy diet to help them in their daily lives they embrace the healthy eating options that are offered to the children daily.

**Enjoyment:** Children respond with enthusiasm to the experiences outside of the classroom. This enthusiasm is reflected in the children’s learning when they return to the classroom. Observations of pupils outside the classroom on visits such as Winmarleigh show their developing independence and the fun they have in their learning.

**Economic Well being:** Through the work the children have planned and implemented in school and the surroundings, it is clear that they make a positive contribution to the world outside of the classroom. Teacher’s planning and evaluation reflects the progress the children make in subjects through their extended learning environment.

As a Healthy School, all the children are aware of the importance of their own health and how sport enables them to develop healthy bodies, for example extended school activities such as Saturday morning multi skills and the tag rugby tournament. The healthy school topic is covered in many different forms throughout the school, e.g. assemblies, science topics, PSHE and SEAL

Experiences such as leading the Carol Service at St. Cuthbert's Church ensure a positive contribution to the community and allow pupils the opportunity to share their worship and talents with others.

Within School the 'Every Child Matters' policy works alongside 'Learning Outside the Classroom'. By embracing the two, children leave school being independent, confident and self-aware.

**What are the next stages in the development process?**

To continue to embrace 'Learning Outside the Classroom' the planning and delivery of new and different topics covered within the curriculum, staff need to continually look for opportunities to enhance the children’s experiences of topics where they are beneficial and relevant.
Opportunities are taken to involve parents, outside resources or educational visits to enhance children's learning.

**What aspects of this practice may be useful for other establishments to consider?**

Adoption of a more creative approach to the curriculum will better allow schools to embrace 'Learning Outside the Classroom'.