

## **STANSTED PARK GETS TOP MARKS FOR EDUCATIONAL VISITS**

Stansted Park on the Hampshire-Sussex border has shown itself to be at the top of the class for educational visits by being awarded a Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge.

Awarded by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, the Quality Badge combines for the first time learning and safety into one easily recognisable badge for all organisations providing learning outside the classroom experiences.

Stansted Park spokesperson Janet Sinclair said “Being awarded the Quality Badge is a real coup for all the staff here as it shows that we offer young people the type of high quality learning experiences they really benefit from. We're thrilled to get official recognition for our efforts and we look forward to welcoming even more children and young people from the local area to our lovely upstairs-downstairs house and its grounds.”

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, along with the badges, provides guidance and information for 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 as a signal to schools that their venue has met required standards, so teachers do not need to carry out their own risk or quality assessments.

There are two routes to the Quality Badge. Route 1 is for organisations offering activities that are considered relatively low risk and activities that take place wholly in controlled areas used by the public, such as museums, galleries and places of worship. Route 2 is for organisations providing activities that require a degree of technical knowledge and experience beyond the lay person. For example, adventurous activities

such as rock climbing and river and coastal fieldwork, where young people enter the water to make measurements.

Providers looking to gain the badge will need to meet a set of six quality indicators and will be supported through a developmental process by a package of on-line support materials, which will include guidance, good practice exemplars, downloadable templates and training materials.

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 practical decision making tool. It should ensure that many more young people have memorable, exciting and valuable learning outside the classroom experiences. I congratulate Stansted Park 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 in conjunction with a wide range of partners. 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](http://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/](http://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](http://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 was launched in April 2009 and is the leading voice on learning outside the classroom issues.