

JAMES HAMILTON ACADEMY'S OUTWARD BOUND COURSE

In 2016, The Jo Walters Foundation's generous donation of **£1,660** enabled **19 pupils** from James Hamilton Academy to participate in an Outward Bound course. The young people attended a three day Adventure & Challenge course at our Loch Eil centre in Scotland, where they had the opportunity to increase their confidence, develop their teamwork skills and learn to persevere through challenges.

Table 1: Background information on the course participants

No. of young people	Age of young people	Purpose of course	Participant characteristics
19	12 to 13 years	Enhance pupils' confidence and self-esteem Increase pupils' expectations of what they can achieve Develop pupils' ability to work in a team Increase pupils' resilience and ability to persevere Raise pupils' awareness of, and concern for, the natural environment	Many of the pupils have not experienced life outside of Kilmarnock. There is a major lack of parental support for some pupils. The participants have low expectations of their potential to attain and achieve. Some of the participants are eligible for free school meals. Some of the participants have special educational needs.

THE EXPERIENCE

On arrival, the young people and their two accompanying teachers were split into two groups, with one allocated Outward Bound instructor per group. During the course, the pupils faced a variety of challenges including the 'jog and dip'¹, climbing, high ropes activities and a team raft building challenge.

THE LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of their course, the young people and their accompanying teachers completed feedback forms. Their comments indicate that the course had a variety of learning outcomes and that it met its objectives. In particular, the course **built the young people's confidence, increased their willingness to take on challenges and developed their ability to work with others.**

¹ Participants run to the waterfront, before jumping into the loch from a jetty.

Increased confidence and willingness to take on challenges

During the course, the young people were faced with a number of mental and physical challenges, such as jumping into cold water and climbing at great heights. As they overcame these challenges, their confidence and their belief in their own abilities grew. This increased their willingness to take on further challenges. At the end of the course:

- **16 (of 19) participants** reported that they were more aware of their strengths.
- **14 (of 19) participants** reported that they felt more confident in themselves.
- **Both accompanying teachers** reported that the young people had realised that they were capable of more than they had thought.

+ “[WHEN I HAD CLIMBED BEN NEVIS, I FELT] HAPPY, SO HAPPY [AND] PROUD.” **Stuart², 13** +

+ “[AS THE COURSE PROGRESSED, THE PUPILS BECAME] MORE LIKELY TO COMPLETE CHALLENGES AND STRETCH THEMSELVES, PUSHING OUT OF [THEIR] COMFORT ZONES.” **Accompanying teacher** +

+ “I LEARNT TO THINK POSITIVE AND ALWAYS FACE A CHALLENGE.” **Zoe, 12** +

Improved ability to work with others

Many of the activities required the young people to work as a team. This developed their understanding of other people and the value of teamwork and their ability to work with others. At the end of the course:

- **16 (of 19) participants** reported that they were more aware of other people’s skills and qualities.
- **Both accompanying teachers** reported that the young people had developed their ability to work collaboratively with others.

+ “I LEARNT TO SPEAK MORE AND GIVE MORE IDEAS.” **Aiden, 12** +

+ “I LEARNT TO WORK WITH GIRLS.” **Lewis, 12** +

+ “[I LEARNT TO] ENCOURAGE OTHERS.” **Scott, 12** +

² All names of young people in this report have been changed in order to protect their anonymity.

MESSAGES OF THANKS

The young people and their accompanying members of staff wished to express their gratitude for the funding that made it possible for them to attend their Outward Bound course:

“Thank you very much for your generous donation. I really enjoyed myself thanks to it. ☺”

Lewis, 12

“Thank you so much for making the price cheaper so that we could have a great time with friends and challenge ourselves.” **Hannah, 12**

“It was amazing, thanks so much for paying some of the money towards this trip.” **Zoe, 12**



“It was so much fun, I want to stay forever.” **Keira, 12**

“Many thanks for giving [the] young people this fantastic opportunity to participate in activities they would not normally do, challenges they would not have but for this – They have been moved into a new experience physically, emotionally and geographically.”

Accompanying teacher

