

# Quality Learning Outside the Classroom

Leszek Iwaskow

Her Majesty's Inspector

National Adviser for Geography



Ofsted























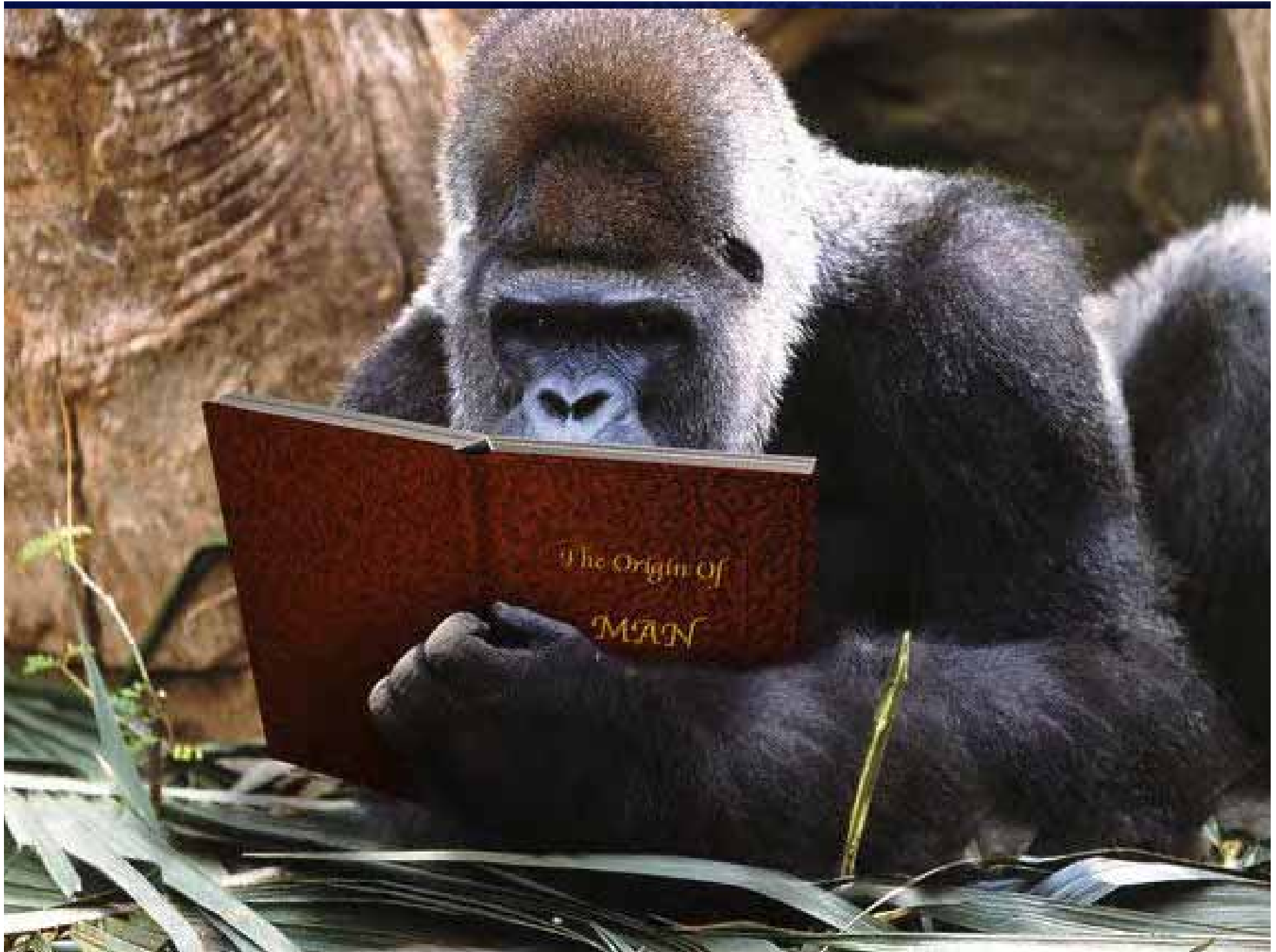












# Learning to make a difference...

- I hear and I forget.
- I see and I remember.
- I do and I understand.

Confucius

## Learning outside the classroom

How far should you go?

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At a time when the government is actively promoting learning outside the classroom, this report evaluates the importance of such learning in primary and secondary schools and colleges. It identifies strengths and weaknesses in practice and shows how schools and colleges overcome common barriers that can limit successful learning outside the classroom. In doing so, it provides models that others could consider.

**Age group:** 3–19

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**Published:** October 2008

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**Reference no:** 070219

## Education for sustainable development

Improving schools – improving lives

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Ofsted visited 14 schools over a three-year period to evaluate how effectively they had developed pupils' understanding of sustainability and whether education for sustainable development had any impact on improving the broader life of the school.

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**Age group:** 4–18

**Published:** xxxx 2009

**Reference no:** 090004

# First hand experiences improve learning



## Middle class scared of the countryside

ROSE HENRY

MIDDLE CLASS mothers are too afraid to take their children rambling because they struggle to read maps and are worried about mud and danger, a study suggests.

The countryside is off-limits because it is out of the comfort zone of many affluent, suburban parents, said researchers.

A lack of map-reading skills was a barrier, while fear of their children being hurt, abducted or getting dirty or running away was also cited.

As a result, most parents limited excursions to country parks and farms that catered for families.

The research by Hertfordshire University, carried out at a prep school in the south of England, found that while children were open to the idea of rambling, their mothers were not confident in the great outdoors.

Debbie Pearman-Rougie, a senior lecturer in rural geography at the university, said: "None of the mothers I spoke to could read a map. I put a 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map on the table and

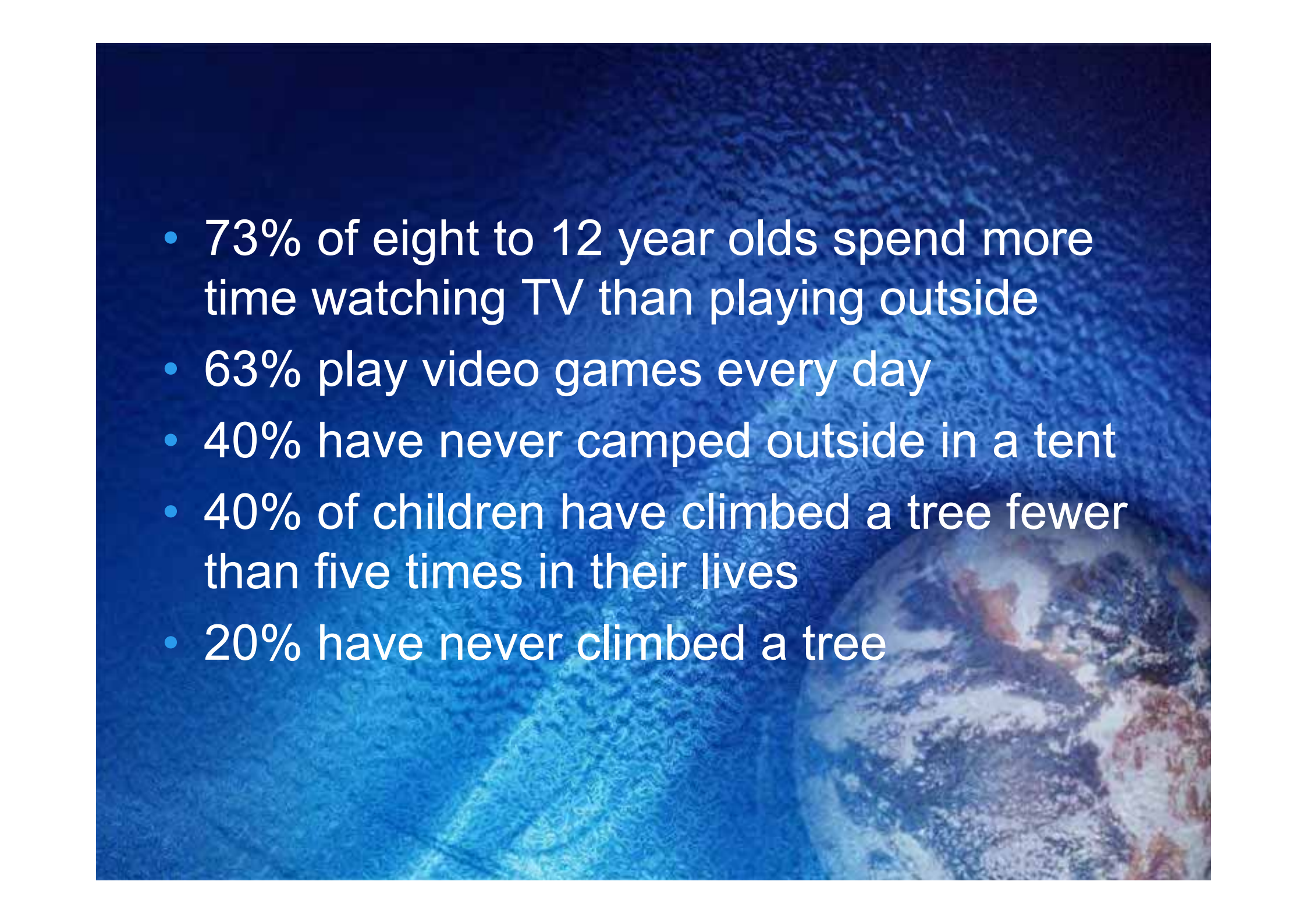
they didn't know where to start. They also didn't know anything about rights of way. These were stories of families who had gone for a walk and ended up on someone's land and got shouted at and never went back."


The academic, who will present her findings to a Countryside Recreation Network conference this week, said middle-class mothers were obsessed with leprosy and dirt.

"They are very scared of children not only being run over, and even being stolen when they were with them. There also seems to be an obsession about cleanliness. Perhaps because children are in expensive clothes, mud seems to be abhorrent," Mrs Pearman-Rougie said.

She added that parents worried that if they set out for a five-mile walk, their children would give up half way round.

Paul Christensen, chairman of Natural England said: "Our research shows that contact with nature has halved in a generation, and that the overwhelming majority of children now want more opportunities to play outdoors."

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- 73% of eight to 12 year olds spend more time watching TV than playing outside
  - 63% play video games every day
  - 40% have never camped outside in a tent
  - 40% of children have climbed a tree fewer than five times in their lives
  - 20% have never climbed a tree

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- 36% play outside once a week or less
  - 28% have not been on a country walk with their families in the last year
  - 21% have never visited a farm

**Source:** survey of 2000 children aged 8 to 12 years, carried out by **Onepoll** in August 2010 on behalf of TV channel **Eden**

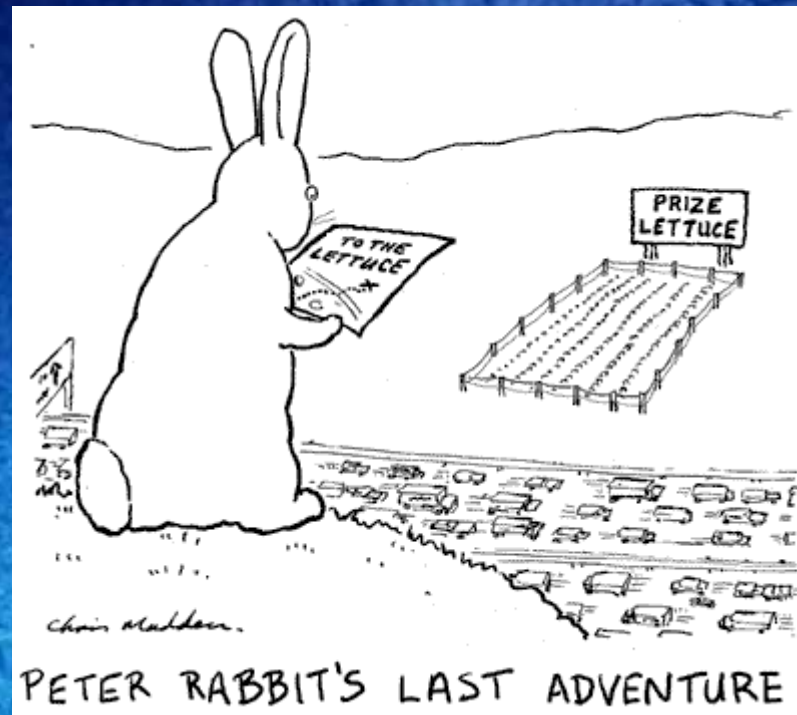
# Developing life skills



# Putting theory into practice...



# Staying safe...





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# Healthy lifestyles....





The decline in the school field trip because of health and safety fears is reported to be one of the main reasons why fewer pupils are taking up geography

# Field trips seen as too dangerous so pupils are ditching geography

► GCSE and A-level numbers fall by 11%

► Heads afraid to allow pupils off the premises

Alexandra Frum Education Editor

Health and safety fears have contributed to a big decline in school geography field trips, prompting many students to abandon the subject, the schools inspectors say today.

At a time when geographical issues such as floods, rising sea levels, conflict resolution, famine and global trade disputes are constantly in the news, numbers studying their causes and consequences in the classroom are in decline. Ofsted concludes: "Inspectors blame poor teaching, often by teachers who are not experts in the subject, and a perception by pupils of it as 'boring and irrelevant'. In particular, too few schools are taking pupils on field trips, even though this is known

not recognise the value of fieldwork sufficiently and did not fulfil the requirement to provide it. Concerns about health and safety, curriculum time, expertise and budgets reduced the amount and effectiveness of fieldwork," inspectors said.

Health and safety fears were so pronounced in some schools that head teachers had refused to allow pupils off site, the report said.

The report's comments follow concerns expressed by both the Prime Minister and Ed Balls, the Schools Secretary, that a "cocoon-school culture" in schools risks denying children important opportunities for learning and enjoyment. Gordon Brown announced yesterday the creation of a new task force, the Risk and Regulation Advisory Council, to restore Britain's sense of adventure.

In addition to fears about health and safety, some schools said that they did not offer field trips because they caused "disruption to the timetable". Others cited "cultural barriers", noting that it was sometimes difficult to get permission for Muslim girls

### Course works?

**213,123**

Number of GCSE geography examinations last year

**11%**

Fall in numbers of both GCSE and A-level students since 2005

**31,653**

Number of A-level geography examinations last year

Source: Alex Frum for The Times

Cristine Gilbert, the chief inspector for education, children's services and skills, said that much more needed to be done to make geography relevant and more engaging for pupils, particularly in the early years of secondary school when it is still

left at GCSE, but numbers are low. Last year 213,124 students sat the test at GCSE, but this represents 11 per cent fall on 2005. An A-level number of students has also fallen more than 11 per cent, to 31,653, the same period. The report said many teachers were not confident in teaching the subject and little opportunity to improve knowledge.

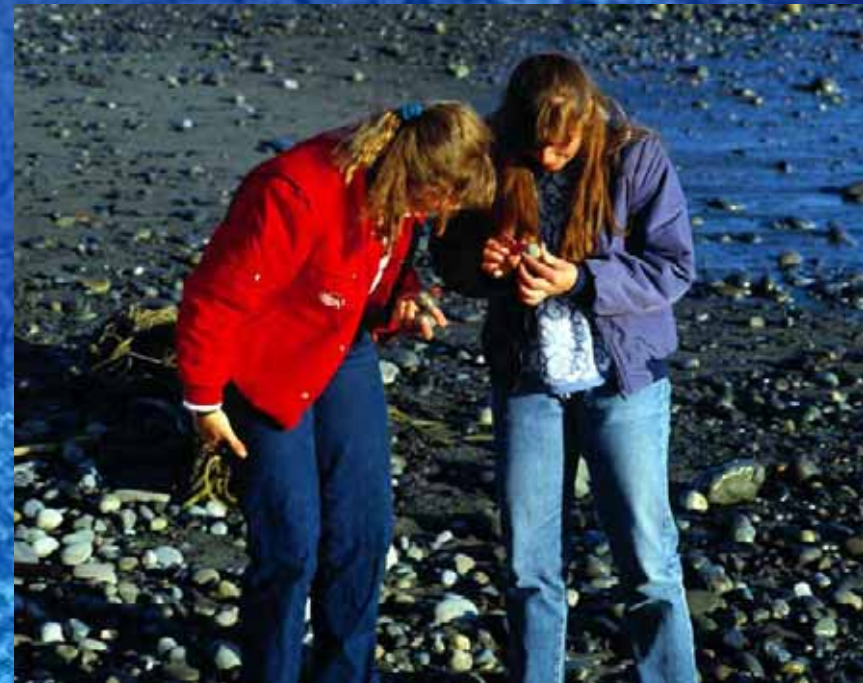
The global dimension of geography was underdeveloped in the major schools surveyed and too little done to reinforce pupils' understanding of issues such as global climate diversity, human rights, sustainable development.

Ros Cuthbert, director of the Geographical Society, said that health and safety fears could be overcome involving pupils. "I would far rather see young people involved in the risks themselves. It gives them real life skills and takes away the scary from it," she said.

Five teaching was often the lack of a lack of specialist knowledge among teachers. Dr Gardner said



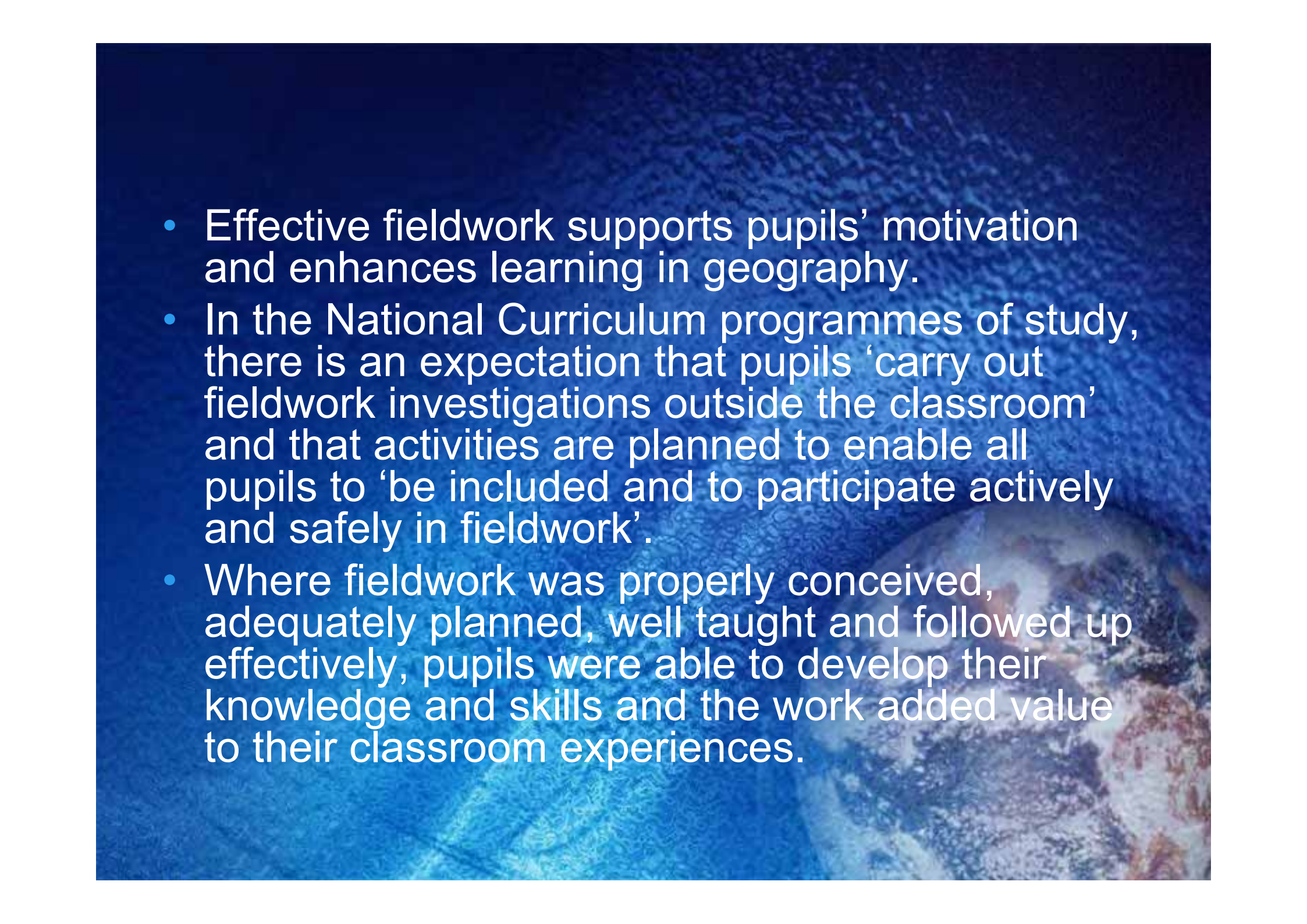
The majority of the primary and secondary schools do not recognise the value of fieldwork sufficiently and did not fulfil the requirement to provide it.

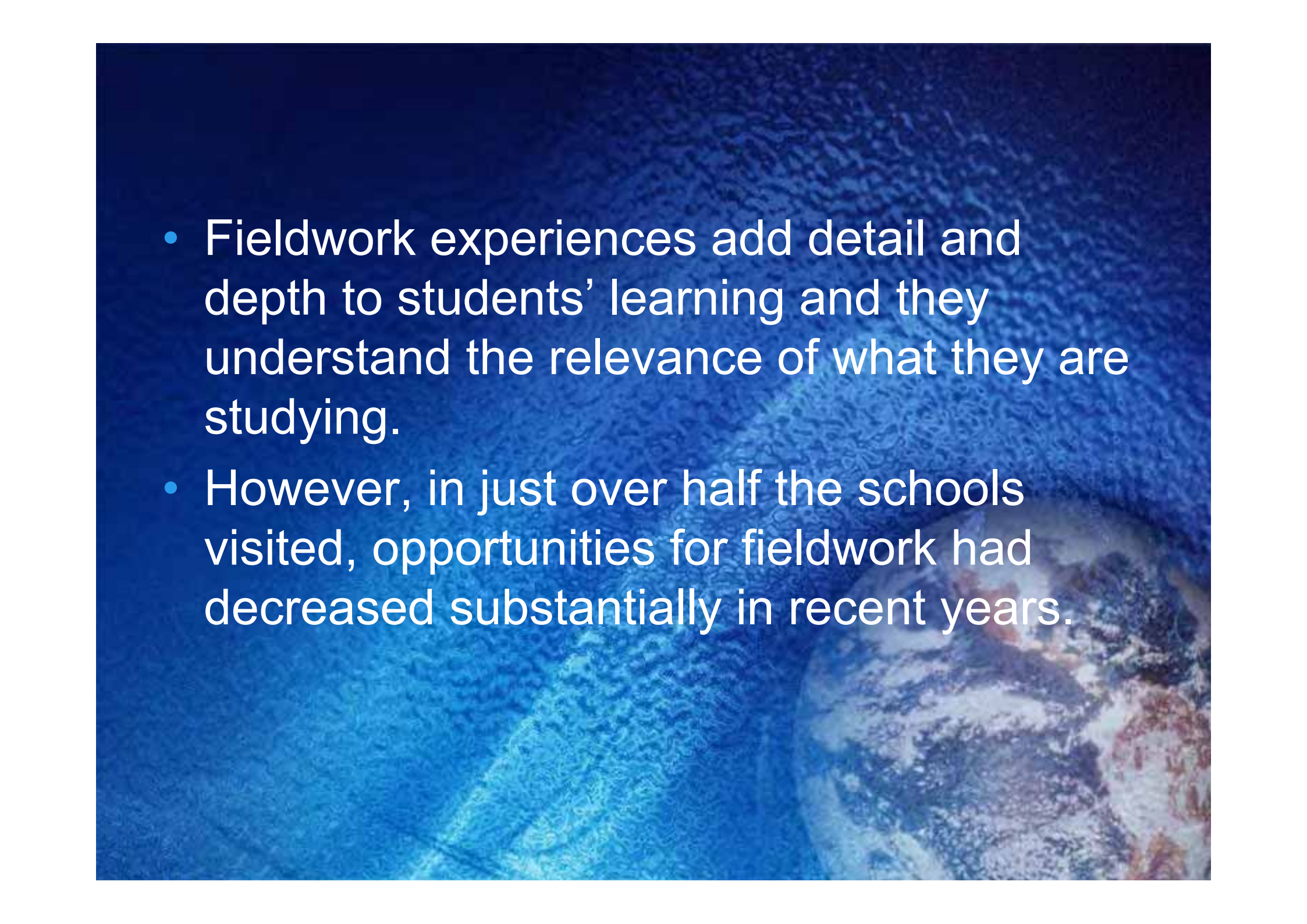


- ‘It is not only about what we learn but importantly how and where we learn’.

*Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, DfES, 2006.*




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- Effective fieldwork supports pupils' motivation and enhances learning in geography.
  - In the National Curriculum programmes of study, there is an expectation that pupils 'carry out fieldwork investigations outside the classroom' and that activities are planned to enable all pupils to 'be included and to participate actively and safely in fieldwork'.
  - Where fieldwork was properly conceived, adequately planned, well taught and followed up effectively, pupils were able to develop their knowledge and skills and the work added value to their classroom experiences.

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- The background of the slide is a deep blue underwater scene showing a coral reef. A semi-transparent globe is overlaid on the right side of the image. The text is white and positioned on the left side of the slide.
- Fieldwork experiences add detail and depth to students' learning and they understand the relevance of what they are studying.
  - However, in just over half the schools visited, opportunities for fieldwork had decreased substantially in recent years.



- 'I still don't know what geography is actually for on a practical level but, as a subject, surely it's about the world and what goes on in it. Seems to me that getting out and looking at it, even a very small corner of it, is an essential part of learning about it'



‘ Our time in St Ambrose Barlow has already taken us from places as far flung as New York to as close home as the local precinct. We believe fieldwork is the most down-to-earth form of learning in geography  
....Fieldwork allows us as students to interact with the environment we learn about and bring textbooks to life. The term fieldwork generally means getting out and about in the real world...During our visit to Malham, we encompassed the key elements of the syllabus within a few days. This is what makes geography unique, it is in the world around us and it is alive.’

‘Our geography’. St Ambrose Barlow RC High School and Technology College, Salford: pupils’ views of the value of fieldwork.

# Ofsted recommended that schools:

- ensure that all pupils have access to out-of-classroom learning to support their understanding of the need to care for their environment and to promote their physical and mental well-being



Education for sustainable development: Improving schools – improving lives

December 2009

# Please sir, can we have more time in school?

Standards in the three Rs have stalled, says Ofsted

■ Pupils' plea stuns Ofsted inspectors

■ They say lessons and activities are fun

DEBORAH HAILE

FOR generations of pupils the end of the school day has signalled a mad dash for the door and freedom.

But at one school, inspectors were surprised when children complained that the day wasn't long enough.

Pupils at St Augustine's CE Primary, in Monsall, Manchester, start lessons at 8.50am and finish at 3.15pm.

When Ofsted inspectors visited, pupils told them: "Can you please get the school day extended? We enjoy coming to school and want more lessons."

Inspectors were so struck by the remarks they included them in their report. They described

the school as 'a safe and loving oasis for the children' but standards remained inadequate.

They also said most of the children were 'making satisfactory progress'. The report noted good behaviour and highlighted growing confidence in the school, which faced closure 18 months ago.

Now the pupils have been speaking about what makes their school so special.

Georgia Edwards, 11, said: "We would like to extend the day, because we are learning things."

"I like to learn with my friends - and if school was longer you could spend more time with teachers and go on more trips."

James Murphy, also 11, said: "It's a fun place to go and the teachers are really nice. You don't learn in a boring way but with interactive white boards. I really like computers."

Vanessa Umuhora, 11, said:

"We have breakfast clubs and after-school for cheerleading, football, basketball and netball. And there is a computer club. The teachers are really nice. When you are stuck with your work they really help you."

Sapphire Croft, 11, added: "We have new equipment in the playground and I really like the computers. The day should be

longer because in school you get to learn new things and it's not boring."

Headteacher Cath Potter has welcomed the report, but has yet to make a decision on extending the school

day.

She said: "The report said we were providing a safe and loving oasis for the children and that's what we feel we are. It's great that the children want to stay longer at the school. The school already offers lots of activities after school. I don't know what the staff would say about extending the day."

**'It's fun and the teachers are really nice'**



TOP CLASS Headteacher Cath Potter with 11-year-old Sapphire Croft, who says lessons are never boring

SCHOOL standards have 'stalled' as one in five children leaves primary education unable to read, write and add up properly.

Education watchdog Ofsted dismissed claims by ministers that standards are rising and warned that England's state schools will never rank among the world's best without major improvements.

Ofsted's chief inspector Christine Gilbert said 20 per cent of pupils still fail to master basic English and maths aged 11.

Ms Gilbert was speaking as she outlined plans for a radical overhaul of the way Ofsted monitors schools, in which children and parents will be able to trigger inspections.

The proposals, published for consultation, said: "If education in England is going to compare favourably with the best in the world, standards need to improve."

"In fact they have stalled."

Ms Gilbert added: "We need to accelerate improvements and we are looking at ways of doing that."

**Setting an example is not the main  
means of influencing others; it is the  
only means**

**Albert Einstein**