

Life skills and life-enhancing experiences

Beyond The Classroom



Our Experience

Delta Academies Trust, a visionary Multi Academy Trust, responsible for 63 schools across some of the most disadvantaged areas of Yorkshire and The Humber, is proud to have its own Environmental and Outdoor Education Centre in Dallowgill, North Yorkshire.



This state-of-the-art facility, nestled in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales, provides Delta's students with a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the natural world and develop a lifelong appreciation for the environment.

The centre is a testament to the Trust's commitment to providing its students with the most enriching and transformative educational experience possible. It is a place where students can learn, grow, and thrive in a truly unique and unforgettable setting.

Since the centre opened in 2021, **more than 8000 students** have visited on a day trip or residential experience. of which around 50% are from disadvantaged backgrounds. It continues to be fully booked with all week days allocated up to July 2026, with offers already coming through for bookings after this time.

The Trust has put £2m of funds aside to maintain Dallowgill's centre to the highest standard. Delta have bought the nearby disused church to create extra capacity, and are looking to purchase land from the local farmer with an ambition to build a Duke of Edinburgh Award centre.

An executive coach is also housed on-site to provide transport for children between academies and Delta sites, removing cost issues associated with residential trips.



The Journey

The Dallowgill centre had been gifted to Mexborough Academy (now The Laurel Academy) in the 1970s. When the academy joined the Trust, Delta made the decision to redevelop the building for the benefit of all students across the Trust.



The building had fallen into a state of disrepair. Delta took the decision to redevelop the centre and reopen once again to be used as originally designed, but better.

- There are 10 rooms which sleep 36 people
- One room has an en-suite wet room and is fully accessible for wheelchair users
- The kitchen is fully equipped and caters for large groups
- The classroom is fitted with an interactive smart board and tablets
- Outdoors features a fire pit with seating for story-telling activities

The facility supports enrichment across the curriculum, immersing students in nature and teaching them important life skills. With access to local farms and designated camping areas for astronomy, the centre is the unique jewel in the crown of Delta's outdoor education provision.

The reputation of the centre has gone from strength to strength, with local and national services partnering with the site:

- Barn Owl Trust
- Woodland Trust
- Local farmers
- Local contractors
- Local artists & storytellers
- Involvement with community activities
- Scouts & Guides
- Vacation chamber orchestra
- Local historians.



Our Impact

Hear from our students

"This is the nicest place I've ever stayed"

A child with disabilities who lives in an unadapted house:

"This is the first time I have been able to have a shower without an adult helping me"

"Normally I hate walking, but this is the most beautiful place I have ever seen"

"There are so many animals here. It's like being in a zoo but outside in nature"

"I loved seeing the stars. I never knew there were so many"

Hear from our teachers

"It's amazing to have a facility like this for our students. Most of them never get the chance to explore areas like this"

"Lots of our kids rarely leave the estate and spend most of their free time on screens. It's great to see them really engage with the environment and play board games together"

"I've seen a really different side to [child]. They're normally so quiet in school but they've loved it here. I'll be able to tap into this when we get back to school"

"Being able to bring groups down here and show them the different features of a river right outside the front door is priceless. I've got through more work with them in 6 hours here than I would have done in a half term at school, it makes the learning interesting and relevant"



Local community

"I was so worried when I heard what was going to be happening at the centre, but it's been lovely meeting the kids and seeing them enjoy it so much. It's brought new life to the area"

"It's so nice to see the building looking so good, it was such an eyesore before, and the children are always so polite"



Broadening Horizons

Southmere Primary Academy

“The Dallowgill experience was transformative and enriching in ways we did not anticipate. Many of our pupils attend school with impoverished life experiences, some rarely venture further away from inner city Bradford, and therefore the opportunity for them to visit River Laver, and the surrounding forest at Dallowgill, was an unmissable experience. Pupils applied their learning from the classroom to this real-life setting and had plentiful hands-on experiences with geographical fieldwork and investigation.

it more than just enhanced our curriculum, it provided pupils with a chance to dip their wellied feet in a river, pick up scattered pine cones and have pooh stick races; things that were ‘firsts’ for the majority of these young people.”

The Vale Primary Academy

“Many children at the academy do not get to experience nature or have the opportunity to explore the outdoors in such creative and dynamic ways. Dallowgill has allowed our children to have this rich and memorable experience which will stay with them beyond their school years.

Children said their time at Dallowgill helped them gain self confidence, collaborate and step out of their comfort zone in a safe and caring environment.”

Crookesbroom Primary Academy

“Year 6 visited Dallowgill for team-bonding exercises to set pupils up for the big year ahead. Taking their forest school experience from Crookesbroom to the real thing was amazing; the chance to put their skills into practice in those stunning surroundings was unforgettable.”

Goldthorpe Primary Academy

“It was an opportunity for exploration in such a way that our children had never had before and will always remember. For some it was the first time in a woodland, for others it was the first time they had sat round the camp fire and heard a story.”

Whetley Academy

“The growth in terms of children’s independent skills was amazing to see. The amazement in their eyes when they first walked around the Dallowgill site was a picture. They created incredible memories that will last a lifetime.”

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Outdoor provision

Research

“Contact with the outdoors is often limited for many children in modern society, and the vital experience of using the outdoors and being comfortable in nature is being lost.”

- *Forest Research*

Delta ensures all pupils across every academy experiences Dallowgill and the surrounding areas of 'Outstanding Natural Beauty', taking them into the countryside for, sometimes, their first overnight stay away from home.

“Learning outside the classroom must not become only the preserve of pupils from more affluent backgrounds...all children should have opportunities to experience environments away from their local area ... including the natural environment of the English countryside.”

Delta operates in deprived areas with children from disadvantaged backgrounds, many of whom do not leave their home town. Delta provides the experiences that families can struggle to offer.

“Benefits for pupils learning outside the classroom include: improved engagement; development of learning and thinking skills; strengthening of personal, social and emotional development.”

Teachers have seen whole classes go silent by experiencing the vast open countryside. The appreciation of nature is instant and powerful.

“There is evidence that some groups of pupils opt out of school trips and visits for financial reasons.”

Delta-owned sites and transportation provide affordable options that are accessible to all, regardless of their backgrounds.

“For children from low income families, school provision may be the only opportunity they have to experience different environments from their immediate locality.”

- *House of Commons
Transforming Education Outside the Classroom*

Across Delta, 39% of children in primaries and 37% in secondaries are Pupil Premium. These children may not get to experience the world outside of their home town without the opportunities provided through school life.



Expanding our outdoor provision

YHA Patterdale

Delta are excited to develop a potential partnership with YHA, building on our strong relationship with the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

The Trust serves communities with high deprivation and the Delta mantra of 'Changing Lives' resonates deeply with the mission of YHA:

"We transform young lives forever through travel and real adventure. Because where you go changes who you become".



Through our proposed partnership with YHA Patterdale, we aim to invest significantly into the building to create another state-of-the-art residential centre.

We are also seeking a working relationship with YHA to provide access to the centre for children and families as a bookable facility. We want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from the facilities and activities that the centre has to offer.

Delta's CEO recently spoke on '5 Live', recounting the profound life-changing holiday at Hawkshead Youth Hostel in the Lake District he had as a child. His personal connection to the importance of outdoor education is why Delta is committed to expanding opportunities for all students and providing outstanding facilities to do so.

We have an ambitious vision to replicate our success with Dallowgill at other areas of natural outstanding beauty. Patterdale would offer similar opportunities to Dallowgill's centre but also enable some thrilling new activities such as:

- **Water sports like rafting & kayaking**
- **Hiring of boats and bikes**
- **Rock Climbing & Mountaineering**
- **Sailing & Windsurfing**

This centre would provide a more affordable and accessible option for Delta students when owned by the Trust, giving them more opportunities to have life-changing experiences.



“For children, the effects are profound, with a wealth of evidence showing those who spend time outside connecting with nature see improvements in school attendance, behaviours, academic achievement, and social skills like teamwork.”

- *Natural England*

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