

Project Title: Exploring the use and impact of outdoor environments in East London Pupil Referral Units

Principal Supervisor: Dr Emma Howarth

Secondary Supervisors: Professor Sam Wass (Department & Institution: School of Psychology, University of East London), Dr Kelly Dickson (Institute of Education, UCL)

Collaborative Organisation: Newham Learning

Project Description: This is an exciting opportunity to undertake a PhD in a project jointly funded by the ESRC UCL, Bloomsbury and East London Doctoral Training Partnership (UBEL DTP) and Newham Learning, a collaboration of 40 schools situated in the London Borough of Newham.

The PhD will explore how outdoor space is utilised for the purpose of learning and recreation by Newham Pupil Referral Units. There has been recent policy attention on how to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children attending PRUS. The use of natural learning environments offers promise as a way to achieve these aims, although evidence on how, why and when outdoor space is utilised in these settings is lacking.

The PhD will draw on a range of methods including evidence reviews and synthesis, observation, video diaries and qualitative interviews. The student will also have the opportunity to test the feasibility of collecting physiological data, by adapting innovative wearable technology developed by Professor Sam Wass. The successful student will be based primarily in the School of Psychology at UEL, where academic supervision and broader skills training and career development support will be provided. For about 25% of the project, the student will be based within Newham schools where a dedicated member of the supervisory team will support the student to understand educational practice in relation to 'at risk' and excluded groups of young people.

There is an expectation that the successful candidate will undertake relevant training offered within and/or external to the doctoral training programme (ie specific modules from Masters programmes and/or external courses) to ensure they are fully equipped to carry out this exciting study. All training will be aligned with UBEL pathways and all other ESRC requirements.

Candidate Requirements: Key Requirements: A masters-level qualification in education, mental health sciences or research, or another relevant social science are essential. Knowledge of qualitative research methods is essential, and prior experience of conducting qualitative research with vulnerable groups is desirable. Excellent interpersonal skills, a commitment to social justice and a demonstrable interest in research in this area are also essential requirements.

Key References:

Deadlines and how to apply:

If you have any queries regarding this studentship, please contact: Dr Emma Howarth, School of Psychology, UEL. E.howarth@uel.ac.uk