

It made you realise how little is accessible for our kind of learners especially in the great outdoors. Lagganlia proved you can make the countryside open for anyone. Oaklands Teacher

Lagganlia 2025



Oaklands Lagganlia Trip 2025

Situated in the north-west of Edinburgh, Oaklands School provides a significantly adapted and supportive learning environment for learners with profound and multiple learning disabilities and often associated health care needs, aged 3 to 18 years old.

Sharon Humble, Sports Coach at Oaklands, approached Andrew Bradshaw, head of the outdoor learning team to discuss the possibility of students from the Senior Phase Group from Oaklands having the opportunity to go on a residential. Right from this moment, there was determination from all parties that this idea would become a reality for these pupils, no matter what potential obstacles might be in the way.

From the 26th to the 29th of August, 6 senior students took part in a memorable residential trip to Lagganlia Outdoor Centre in the stunning natural surroundings of Aviemore, Scotland.

Led by a dedicated team of staff— Morna Phillips, Sarah Murphy, Angela Harrison, Jaqueline Wheble, Jack Allsop, Aryadya Thompson, Sharon Humble, and Peter Verrecchia— the residential provided students with a unique opportunity to challenge themselves, build independence, and engage with the natural environment through a variety of adventurous outdoor activities.



Activities at Lagganlia

Throughout the four-day stay, students participated in a wide range of hands-on, engaging activities, including:

- Canoeing on calm waters, building balance and coordination.
- Tubing, which offered fun and excitement in a safe environment.
- Tree climbing, promoting perseverance, trust, and physical strength.
- Exploration of the local environment, where students engaged in sensory learning, navigation, and environmental awareness.



Each activity was carefully chosen to promote confidence, enjoyment, and learning in an outdoor context.

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With such a can do attitude the experience was magical, watching the young people challenge themselves, achieving skills and experiences that surprised our Oaklands staff team and the learners' parents!

—
- Oaklands Teacher

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Oaklands Lagganlia Trip 2025 - The Student's Experience

The students responded with enthusiasm, positivity, and growing confidence. Many expressed their excitement at being away from home and relished the chance to try new activities. Staff observed high levels of engagement and a genuine sense of pride from students as they overcame challenges and celebrated successes together.



As part of this experience, the students have completed an SQA National 1 unit specification – Learning in a Different Environment.

The components of this unit include:

1. Prepare for a learning activity outside the centre
2. Participate in a learning activity outside the centre
3. Give a response to participating in a learning activity outside the centre.

Oaklands Lagganlia Trip 2025 - The Student's Experience

This residential was not just a break from routine – it was a meaningful experience that supported core areas of personal and educational growth.

Students returned with:

Increased
self esteem

Strengthened
social bonds

Broadened
outdoor
learning
experiences

A lasting
sense of
achievement



These benefits will continue to shape their engagement and learning in the school year ahead.

Oaklands Lagganlia Trip 2025 - Parent/Carer Quotes



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I would like to thank everyone for giving Maddie a fab week away and the opportunities to achieve activities that her brother got to do.

Oaklands are just an amazing school, and you go above and beyond for all the children to reach goals and do not let their disabilities get in the way!!

As was proved seeing our young adults climbing up trees and down!!

Thank you so much to all staff involved and nurses etc making sure that our Children were safe and their needs were met.

For the wonderful team of staff at Lagganlia helping the young adults achieve things they would never be able to do without your knowledge and support this would not have happened.

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The wonderful staff at Oaklands to give up their own personal time for our young adults!!

Words aren't enough, thank you thank you!

Maddie's got so many surrogate mothers and Dads now and I know who to call. I wouldn't let my girl go with anyone you are family to us and a big part of me and Maddie's life!!

My girl has never been overnight with anyone before, and she came back sassy and a maturity I hadn't seen before.

Thank you for letting Maddie be Maddie!! A young teenager enjoying her best years xx

Much love, Jo and Maddie



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Oaklands Lagganlia Trip 2025 - Parent/Carer Quotes



“ My son, Euan, has just come back from 3 nights; 4 days at Lagganlia near Aviemore with some of his teachers and 5 of his classmates. What a laugh they had. The kids did things they have never done before. They went canoeing on a lake; which was freezing; walked through the woods, climbed trees with harnesses and tried tubing. Daytime camping was a lifesaver when the weather was wet. The last night disco was a bit of a riot apparently!! I remember his older brother and sister had a great time too when they went a few years ago. Euan had the best time. He came home with loads of photographs; exhausted from all the fresh air, activities and all the laughter. He had loads of dirty, stinky washing and ate me out of house and home when he came home. He slept all weekend.

“ And, the best bit- Euan has cerebral palsy. He has little communication skills, depends on a wheelchair and needs 24hr care. His 5 classmates also have complex disabilities meaning they need 24hr care too. The positives for Euan and his peer group to do the same things as other young people regardless of their abilities or disabilities was immense.

The activities were inclusive but so too was the sense of equality for the kids.

On the outside it seems that a lot of the kids at Oaklands can't express themselves and can't always let us what they think or how they feel- but inside they know. They know that they were included and that they are valued as much as other kids. The Friends of Oaklands provided the same School Trip that other kids have access to all the time. They were included and they knew it.

Jane Geddes, Parent



Oaklands Lagganlia Trip 2025 - Staff Reflections



The staff team were incredibly proud of how well the students adapted to new environments and challenges. The sense of community, encouragement, and joy shared across the group was a testament to both the planning and the resilience of the young people.

“ It was an utter joy to spend time supporting the young people at Lagganlia. Over the days we were there you could see them growing in confidence and settling into the routines, so different from home and yet they managed them so well.

Oaklands Teacher



“ I feel privileged to have seen inclusion at its best and truly hope all special schools take advantage of the skills, enthusiasm and care of the Lagganlia team. Learning outdoors was the best!

Oaklands Teacher



“ As a team of instructors and school staff, no was never an option. We worked together to problem solve and ensure we did everything we could to enable the pupils to have an unforgettable experience. As we all rafted up on canoes in the middle of Loch Morlich, the Oaklands staff team looked across to one another in disbelief that this had been made possible.

Sarah, Active Schools Coordinator



Oaklands Lagganlia Trip 2025 - A BIG Thank You!

A huge thank you to the entire staff team and the families who supported the trip. Special thanks to the incredible team at Lagganlia Outdoor Centre for providing such a welcoming, safe, and inspiring environment with such positivity and "can-do" approach to adapting activities for our students.

