



venture out

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2026 Mersey - River Study (KS2/3)

What better way to study a river than by being next to it. Whilst in class students will have been watching videos and filling in worksheets but we can offer an immersive experience which will reinforce the topic. We know in school you will have been asking some of these questions ...

**What is a river? Where does it start and finish and what happens in between?
How are they used? How have humans impacted rivers and what are consequence of that?**

The Mersey around our centre is perfect to answer so many of these questions, lots of natural and engineered features are present...the efforts to protect from flooding and the consequences when it does. We can get children into the river to do some 'kick test' sampling of the river quality to find out what is living in the river.....a surprisingly large and varied amount. Also, what better way to see a river (and loads of fun) than a session actually on the river.....looking for plant life, fish and to understand flow and current.

We can run trips all year round but ideally you should plan a river topic in September or from mid April onwards....ideally May when life in the river is really starting to wake up!

(we base our prices on a standard 30 in a class if you are a little over that is fine...if you are significantly under then please contact us as we might not need as many staff and as such might be able to reduce the price))

Option 1 – study and river trip

Study followed by canoe trip to Didsbury or Northenden to look at flood defences.

(£741.60 /class of 30 to max 33 pupils)

ONLY 1 CLASS PER DAY

This option is all based around our Centre starting at Burnage Rugby Club SK4 3EA **BUT** finishes either at Didsbury (M20 2RU) or Northenden (M22 4HJ)

Arrival and greetings

Introduction and presentation about the River Mersey.

Morning rotation of activities

1. River quality study - *led by Venture-Out*
2. Short river walk study – *led by Venture-Out*

Afternoon

River canoe trip for whole class to either Didsbury (Simon's Bridge) or Northenden. (this is great fun but does mean we finish at a different location).



Option 2 – study and local canoe (MOST POPULAR)

(£576.80 class of up to 30 to max 33 pupils)

WE HAVE A PLAN THAT WOULD WORK WITH 45 OR 60 STUDENTS IN A DAY

This option is all based around our Centre and starts and finishes at Burnage Rugby Club SK4 3EA

Arrival and greetings

Introduction and presentation about the River Mersey. Break into 2 groups of 15 and rotate activities.

Rotation activities (breaks and lunch between rotations)

MORNING

1. River quality study – **looking at water quality and water animal life is in the riverbed.**
2. Walk and talk study – **children will answer a short questionnaire based on the features that they come across**

AFTERNOON

3. Canoe session **ON** the river. - **what better way to be studying a river than to be on it!!**
4. We add Orienteering into the day (good for Geography and Maths) – this allows us to rotate 4 groups during the day

Option 3 – all land-based study

(£432.60 for a class of up to 30 to 33 max) pupils

For teachers that don't want to canoe with their students

Arrival and greetings

Introduction and presentation about the River Mersey.

Morning

Class split into 2 groups and begin a 1.5hr session.

Group 1

- A walking survey up-stream from the centre. Identifying features and answering a set of questions.
- Performs River quality study.

Group 2

- undertakes river walk down-stream using a map to visit features of erosion and flood defence. We will also visit a site a little down river to look at the effect of gravity in producing a rapid and on a bend to look at the effects on an 'inside and outside' bend.

Afternoon

Groups swap activities.

Requires two Venture-Out staff all day.



Alternatives?

Fletcher Moss Flood Basin – we can lead a class around the Fletcher Moss Flood Basin looking at all the man-made features that have been put in place to try to protect Didsbury and other areas down river from flooding, (this is accessible from Didsbury Village Tram station, and you could bring a picnic with you to make a whole day out).

Is your school near a River?

Maybe we can come to you and help you study your local river?

We are very flexible and creative in what we do and often tweak our offers to school based on their specific requirements and can mix and match different. Lots depends on the time you can get to us and need leave and how you are travelling.

Details of each activity option

Welcome and presentation.

Introducing the Mersey and the river study.

- Source of the Mersey in Derbyshire (Dammed tributaries, gritstone bedrock)
- Historic uses and abuses,
- Project to clean up and install flood protection.
- Looking at a map of local area.

Water quality survey

Visual classification: The pupils use a checklist to conduct a visual inspection of the riverbank, bottom and surface to rate the water quality on a scale.

River invertebrate classification: The presence of certain invertebrates in the river indicates the quality of the water. Pupils carry out a 'river dip' with nets and observation equipment. And use an identification sheet to classify what they have caught.

- Using a classification key to identify invertebrates.
- Identify a food chain and web in the Mersey River.



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Short river survey walk

Groups use a map to walk to set points on the river near the centre. There are photos to help them determine when they have found a point. At that point the leader reads information from a pack and points out the feature being discussed. Students have clipboards and recording sheets.

Short River Survey Walk (extended)

The above walk can be extended to do a study of the river flow speed at different points.

Canoe – local canoeing

(10 to 23 students at a time in rotations)

It's good to actually get on the river and whilst having fun we can help the students to consider flow and current, maybe see some fish, water plant life and observe what birds inhabit the river banks.

Canoe - down river trip - to Didsbury or Northenden

(30 students in one trip or 45 can be split with half walking and half canoeing and then split)

To study further points along the river where erosion and flood protection features are obvious, we can lead you on a river trip. We use rafted canoes – this is two canoes strapped together by a wooden beam to make a catamaran that is extremely stable, cannot turn over and is easier to paddle by the group. 6 to 8 people can fit in one raft, and this reduces the number of craft on the river to be managed. The river is mainly grade 1 and we regularly paddle groups of 30 down this section in rafted canoes. The trip leaders are well qualified and very experienced. We can provide a risk assessment and will send you our insurance and copy of our Adventurous Activity license.

River walking trip

A 2 km walking trip is undertaken from the centre along the Mersey River path to Old Bedian's Rugby.

Visit a rapid where there is obvious bank erosion and differing flow speed.

Perform a river flow speed comparison.

This path is mainly on the top of a flood control dyke and protects houses behind.

Visit a flood meadow control gate and follow the flood channel into the meadow around Old Bedian's Rugby club.

Group collects photographic evidence.

Previous customers include:

William Hulme Grammar School / Northenden Community School / Cavendish Primary School / St Catherines RC Primary School / Tithe Barn Primary School / Newall Green Primary School / Didsbury Road Primary School

Students conduct river dip on a side channel of the Mersey at the centre.



River dipping equipment and identifications sheets used to determine water quality (moderately clean)



Students paddling rafted canoes – strapped together for stability. Channelled river.



Pupils can get out of boats to study the corner to study deposition and erosion and flow speeds.



Flood meadow control gate at Old Bedian's Rugby club.



Students pointing out the concrete reinforcement of the channelled banks.



Students can get to run the weir at Northenden (an erosion protection feature). This is extremely safe to do in rafted canoes and we do numerous times a week without incident. Think of it like a water slide with a splash at the end. If a teacher or schools is uncomfortable with this, we can get the group off the river above the weir – this is at the get off point and doesn't shorten the trip.

