



Sports for all

Snozone in Milton Keynes and Castleford, provides snow sport experiences and a number of other related activities for all schools. We spoke to Kyle Bell, Snozone's general manager at Milton Keynes, to find out why it is such a great place to take school groups.



Q Tell us about Snozone, including what it offers schools and its overall aim?

A Snozone operates two indoor real snow centres in Milton Keynes and Castleford and since opening over 15 years ago, we have taught more than two million people of all ages to ski or snowboard.

Aside from skiing and snowboarding lessons and coaching, we also offer a very wide-ranging educational programme that supports many elements of the curriculum and of course, we deliver fantastic term-time and end of term activities to school children such as fun sledging sessions!

Most schools mix up their visits with a blend of focused training one visit and whizzing down the slopes on sledges on the next occasion.

Our aim is to put the fun back into snow sports as too often in this sector, skiing and snowboarding have been taught in a very instructional manner with less emphasis on coaching, and we've been at the forefront of driving this change in our sport.

Q What skills can children gain from visits to Snozone?

A Children can learn about the benefit of exercise, whilst they discover an exhilarating sport. We also hope that children can develop key life skills such as teamwork, responsibility, and elements of leadership, but most importantly, develop self-confidence.

Q I see you have an educational offering for students. Why does this appeal to teachers?

A We can assess the snow sports components of GCSE, as well as A Level and BTEC PE or Sport. Many ski

schools abroad tend to be expensive nowadays, especially with the current exchange rate and Snozone offers the provision and expertise of assessment here on our own real snow slopes. We can offer a very affordable solution that doesn't necessitate going abroad at great expense to achieve the school's goals.

Q Are there any further areas that would appeal to schools?

A We also go out and deliver talks to schools on what we do and how Snozone operates as a business, which links directly to certain key stage modules for Business Studies.

During the school holidays we deliver our own Holiday Camps which whilst focused on snow sports activities on the slopes, also deliver non-slope sessions in between activities such as 'Mini Medics' – a certified first aid course for children, very light fitness drills- to emphasise the need for children to stay fit and healthy and this summer we'll be administering sign language lessons

too. Mini Medics and the sign language course promote areas of 'good citizenship' that support some school's objectives in this field.

On another note, we deliver snow to schools. I think we've been without a white Christmas since 2011, so we enjoy adding a traditional flavour by transporting tonnes of snow and spreading it around the playground!

Q You have an ethos of 'sports for all', tell me about this.

A We truly believe that snow sports should be accessible to all. In 2016 we created our own Disability Snow School and we're the only UK indoor ski centre to run our own.

Snozone Disability Snow Sports teaches children and adults with a wide range of disabilities and challenges. We're passionate about making snow sports fully inclusive. We have fully trained coaches in adaptive snow sports who are dedicated to providing the same opportunities for everyone whatever their physical or mental ability.

Q Safety is paramount on all school trips. How do you keep a school class safe during visits?

A We pride ourselves on our safety record, however we are not complacent and we remain vigilant about the risks associated with the sport and the arena we operate in. We know that parents and teachers place their trust in us to create a very safe environment for their children and students, so we are duty bound to go above and beyond in our constant focus on safety. All equipment is meticulously checked and all participants are under full supervision at all times, both on and off the slopes. We also work with an external health and safety organisation to ensure that we are always fully compliant in our processes and procedures.

• Snozone's aim is to put fun back into snow sports.



“We believe that involving children in sport is an excellent way to supplement formal education.”

Q Why should teachers consider booking a school trip with Snozone and what makes Snozone stand out?

A We believe that involving children in sport is an excellent way to supplement formal education, giving them skills and experiences that will serve them well in their lives ahead. Skiing and snowboarding are great social sports too and families can participate and interact at the same time, which isn't always the case in many other sports. We can offer an authentic alpine experience right here in Milton Keynes and Yorkshire, so you don't actually have to go to the expense of travelling abroad to ski or snowboard anymore. ●

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• Children can learn whilst they discover an exhilarating sport.





Train travel; as easy as ABC

“Train travel is the smarter, greener way to travel and the perfect transport solution for school groups. Choose high speed rail for your next school trip and let the journey itself become part of the educational experience,” says Alison Wood, B2B marketing manager and sales support at Voyages-sncf UK.

Q Please explain what Voyages-sncf offers.

A Voyages-sncf is the world's largest distributor of European rail products and is 100% owned by the French national railway. We sell train tickets for travel throughout France and also into neighbouring European countries, as well as Eurostar services from the UK.

Q Who can buy tickets from you?

A We work closely with tour operators, travel agents and travel organisers as well as directly with consumers. We have a dedicated team that handles bookings for groups – and they look after school groups too. We want to spread the message to other teachers that train travel can be an easy and accessible mode of transport when booking a trip to Europe.

Q Why should school teachers use the services of Voyages-sncf?

A The European rail network is vast and we offer incredibly good coverage. We have unparalleled access to the French network from the biggest cities right down to the smallest villages. We can also book tickets for Spain, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and beyond. School groups travelling to these destinations from the UK would usually go through France first, for



• Alison Wood.

example, taking Eurostar to Paris, or to Lille in northern France and then change platforms or stations to continue their journey.

Q What sort of trips might train travel in Europe be suitable for?

A Rail travel suits trips like language exchanges, as well as ski trips or even day trips and twin centre breaks. Ski trips by train are proving very popular as school groups can take the Eurostar directly from the UK to the French Alps. Disneyland Paris or Futuroscope, the educational theme park, are also readily accessible by rail.

Q Who is a teacher's main point of contact when booking with Voyages-sncf?



• The Eurostar.

• A school group in Paris.

school trips proves that it's not just the destination that matters, but the journey too.

Q What can teachers look forward to in the coming years with Voyages-sncf?

A We've only recently been able to start selling group tickets for passengers travelling in Italy. We now have an agreement with the Italian rail provider to be able to sell group fares for travel throughout the country, which is great for school groups seeking to visit there. Also new will be the direct Eurostar train from London to Amsterdam, due to launch around Easter time in 2018.

Q What would you say to teachers who might be considering travelling with a group of students?

A Travelling by train is easy and convenient, with frequent services all year round. Teachers might be concerned about the practicalities of train travel, but they shouldn't be; it's much easier than you think. The possibilities are endless and the message we want to spread is just how big the European network is, offering so much to school groups travelling over to the continent. •

For quotes and to book:
0844-848 4066
www.voyages-sncf.eu

If you'd like to receive further information on group travel by train, just send an email to salesteam@voyages-sncf.com and they will forward you an information pack.

A We have a dedicated team who deal solely with booking groups and they're all used to working out itineraries, coming up with the best prices and solving issues when they arise. They handle everything and teachers are supported from beginning to end.

Q How many people make up a group booking?

A Ten passengers or more qualify as a group and there is no upper limit. Some of the rail carriers we can book have specific rates for groups of children or youths travelling together.

Q What age would you say rail travel is most suited to when it comes to school groups?

A We've seen mainly Key Stage 3 and 4 students travel with us, although that's not to say Primary schools aren't able to travel by train too.

Q What benefits might train travel have for young people?

A It will open their eyes to the ease of rail travel and perhaps act as a stepping stone to things like Interrailing upon finishing school. We sell Interrail passes too! We want to encourage independent travel.

Q What do you see in the future for train travel?

A There's a lot of money being invested in train travel and its infrastructure right now, with aims to cut down elements like journey times. It's a very exciting time for high speed rail travel in particular and to incorporate this sort of experience into