

# School Farms

providing rich learning experiences  
for children and communities



**School  
Farms  
Network**

supported by



department for  
children, schools and families

**T**here is a growing network of school farms across the UK, providing rich learning experiences for children of all ages and their communities.

Through school farms, pupils can experience the natural world around them and outdoor learning activities are integrated into everyday teaching practices. Activities on school farms support most parts of the formal and informal curriculums.

School farms date as far back as the 19th century, with rapid growth in the 1940s as part of the war effort to boost food production. They then dramatically declined.

There is now a growing awareness again of the importance of educating children about food and healthier lifestyles, and school farms have been recognised as a valuable teaching resource.

There are many benefits of school farms. OFSTED has recognised their contribution in **raising standards**, stating that “the school farm has a very positive impact on learning and links with other schools”.



School farms help deliver the outcomes of **Every Child Matters**.

- **Be healthy:** taking part in farm activities helps with physical and mental health.
- **Stay safe:** working with equipment and animals enables thinking about safety issues in a supervised environment.
- **Enjoy and achieve:** pupils who find a classroom environment difficult can flourish with the hands-on learning approach of farms.
- **Make a positive contribution:** solving farm problems encourages positive and enterprising thinking. Pupils also gain confidence and self-esteem by taking responsibility for farm tasks, such as caring for animals.
- **Achieve economic well-being:** the highly structured nature of farm work, from animal welfare to growing food, provides varied experience in a genuine working environment.

**Child-centred learning** and the importance of finding the right learning style for each individual child is increasingly being recognised. The direct, hands-on nature of farm work can help learners develop their skills and use of **multiple intelligences**. The farm environment stretches the gifted and extends the learning style of others.

Setting up a farm is a way to become a **sustainable school**, a school which prepares young people for a lifetime of sustainable living. It is a way to become a **healthy school**, through curriculum-based activities and exercise, and through growing and cooking produce. It is the perfect resource for **vocational land-based courses**, which lead to a wide range of nationally recognised qualifications. And it is a way to become an **extended school** – at the centre of the community.

A school farm in a secondary setting also enables schools to add the **rural dimension** to their specialist status.

**School Farms Network**



**“The farm gives some pupils a chance to experience a level of success that classroom based lessons have not.”**

*Teacher, Thomas Alleyne's School, Uttoxeter*



**“A school farm is a matchless educational resource and, when used creatively, powerfully supports learning and teaching across the curriculum.”**

*Headteacher, The Warriner School, Oxfordshire*



**“For many children visiting the farm it is their first real experience of where food comes from.”**

*Centre coordinator, Chapman's Hill School Farm, West Midlands*



# School Farms Network

The **School Farms Network** is co-ordinated and supported by the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG).

It provides advice and information for new and existing school farms, and promotes mutual support between

practitioners. If you are thinking of setting up a school farm, or would just like to find out more, please get in touch.



## School Farms Network

Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens  
The GreenHouse  
Hereford Street  
Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

e-mail: [schoolfarms@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:schoolfarms@farmgarden.org.uk)

[www.farmgarden.org.uk/schoolfarms](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/schoolfarms)

For information on wider outdoor learning opportunities visit the Growing Schools website:  
[www.growingschools.org.uk](http://www.growingschools.org.uk)

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