



A record year for visitors to the Centre

Over the past year we have enjoyed working with a record number of visitors to the School's Centre. The programmes that we have put together with our visitors have been varied, imaginative and a lot of fun!

Our visit season is always kick started with indoor lambing on the College farm. Many of our visitors return to the farm annually for lambing and it was good to see new visitors from secondary as well as primary schools this year. We were able to offer some of these older pupils the chance to work alongside our agricultural students to help with the care of the ewes and their lambs, a fantastic opportunity that I'm sure the pupils will remember for many years to come.

As always, many of our visitors came to learn more about the farm and in particular to help children understand the concept of the food chain, from meat production to milk and cereal products. Children enjoyed

learning more about the workings of the milking parlour and the lifecycle of dairy cows, as well as using our hand milling and flaking equipment to process different types of cereals.



Many of our visitors also got their hands dirty in our glass-houses taking the opportunity to support their science based plant topics. Pupils learnt and practiced a range of horticultural techniques including seed sowing, potting-on, taking cuttings and propagating plants from leaf cuttings.

Earlier in the year we also enjoyed hosting a student

teacher from Brighton University on 'complementary' work placement. This is something that the University have introduced to help student teachers develop links with external organizations in outdoor education settings. For those of you who met Naomi I'm sure that you remember her! Naomi enjoyed "spending 5 weeks in wellies" and looks forward to having the opportunity to forge links with a farm in the future. We look forward to hosting another student for placement early next year.

During the summer term we welcomed a new member of staff to the Centre. Lynn Clark joined us on a part-time basis whilst she finishes the final year of her Countryside Management degree. Lynn is experienced in teaching children and adult groups and is in the process of developing some new activities to help children explore and discover the local surroundings.

Autumn 2009

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Managing the risk of E.coli infection during farm visits



"Hand washing is the most effective way to prevent disease spreading bacteria".

The recent cases of E. coli which have been linked to children visiting farms, have all been a result of family visits to 'Open Farms'.

During the recent Year of Food and Farming over one million children took part in educational visits to working farms across the country, without any reported cases of E.coli infection. The level of planning, organization and close supervision of children during educational visits is key to safeguarding their health.

Regular visitors to the College farm will already be aware that there are a number of well established procedures in place to minimize the risk of E.coli contamination. These include teachers being advised to prepare their classes by warning them of the dangers; visitors not

being allowed to carry food or drink onto the farm; children being reminded of the dangers when they arrive for their visit, and supervised hand washing with warm water and liquid soap once children have changed into clean footwear on their return from the farm.

Schools are also asked to carry anti-bacterial hand gel and wipes in their first aid kit for emergencies. However, it's important to note that the use of these products only provides temporary protection from bacterial contamination and is not a substitute for hand washing.

Recent research from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) stated that hand washing, (when done correctly), is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of disease-

causing bacteria.

The skin normally contains dead cells, dried sweat, bacteria, oily secretions and dust. Water alone does not readily remove and disperse these substances. The use of soap helps to pull the dirt, bacteria and oily secretions from the skin so that they can be rinsed off. The important function of washing hands with soap and water is the mechanical removal of bacteria through scrubbing and emulsification.

More guidance for teachers with regard to the procedures for planning visits and managing the risk of E.coli infection during visits can be found on the College website www.plumpton.ac.uk and at www.hse.gov.uk and www.hpa.org.uk

The importance of farm visits ~ new research



Following the recent Year of Food and Farming Kingston University has published an excellent report on the importance of farm visits. The report demonstrates how farm visits are dispelling children's deep ignorance about where the food they eat

comes from and helping teachers deliver a wide spectrum of the national curriculum. Report author Dr Frances Harris went on to say that there was evidence that their children's trips influenced some parents consumer behavior, with sixteen percent of par-

ents saying that they would now be more prepared to change how they chose their food, to buy more local, seasonal or organic products. The report can be accessed from the College website, www.plumpton.ac.uk

We are now an LOTC Quality Badged site

Earlier in the year the Children's Rural Education Centre (CREC) became one of the first organizations in the country to be awarded the Learning Outside of the Classroom Quality Badge.

The quality badge was developed as part of the LOTC manifesto, a national initiative which aims to ensure that young people are given more opportunities to take part in safe and educationally valuable outdoor learning experi-

ences.

The quality badge is designed to offer teachers and local authorities a guarantee that not only is a venue providing the sort of educational value that schools can build on in class long after a visit, but that they also have the appropriate risk management structures in place.

The award of the quality badge demonstrates the College's on-going commitment to helping and inspiring young people to

learn more about food, farming and the countryside whilst enhancing the school curriculum.

Health, safety and quality educational experiences are vitally important considerations where school visits are concerned and we hope that the quality badge, alongside our existing Access to Farms accreditation will enable more schools to undertake visits to the College estate.



Telscombe Cliffs Primary School build us a Wildlife Garden!

Year 5 and 6 pupils from Telscombe Cliffs Primary School visited the College during the Summer term to work with the College's student conservation group, New Leaf. The children and student volunteers created a series of wildlife friendly features within the grounds of the College's School's Centre. These included a 'five star' bug hotel; planting a hedgerow; creating bird feeding station,

nesting pods and bird box's; establishing wildflower areas to attract butterflies and bees; creating a meandering pathway through the Garden and building a compost bin. Miss Farely, year 5 and 6 teacher said "at first the children didn't know what to expect when we told them about the project. However, when we arrived at the College the children were quickly engaged in a wide range of

tasks. The children benefitted greatly from the hands-on approach to learning and the experience has inspired us at school to develop our own nature garden and use the skills that we learnt along the way".

Thank you to all of the children, teachers and parents from Telscombe Cliffs Primary School for all of your hard work!



Book NOW for teacher INSET

We are planning 2 INSET sessions for early next year.

'*Chickens in School*', back by popular demand, is a session for teachers who would like help, advice and guidance on incubating, hatching and keeping chickens in

school. Wednesday 3rd February 2010 from 4-6pm.

'*Wildlife Friendly School Grounds*' will be an opportunity to get practical ideas and inspiration for developing wildlife areas within your school grounds. Learn about

how other schools have developed their grounds and get lots of ideas and inspiration for wildlife features and activities for your school. Thursday 25th February 2010 from 4-6pm.

Please book in advance. £5.00 per person.





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Farming & Countryside Education

Plumpton College has well established links with a wide range of schools and several thousand pupils visit the College estate every year to take part in a broad range of programmes designed to support and enrich classroom learning.

The College has a dedicated Centre for visiting school parties and the estate offers prime opportunity for the investigation of food, farming and the environment. We offer bespoke visits for pupils from pre-school to GCSE. If you would like to discuss bringing your pupils to the College, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 3rd February. Chickens in School INSET, 4–6pm. £5.00 per person.

Thursday 25th February. Wildlife Friendly School Grounds INSET, 4–6pm. £5.00 per person.

1st March–April 30th Lambing at the College farm. Book early to avoid disappointment. 10.30–12.30 daily. £2.00 per pupil.

Saturday 10th May Annual College Open Day, 10am–5pm. Lots of demonstrations, activities and exhibits. An action packed day out for the whole family.

Thursday 24th June. Professor Fluffy Primary event. An opportunity for year 5 and 6 pupils to find out what College life is all about. A day of practical activities, exploration and demonstrations. This day is fully funded by Aimhigher Sussex and booking is essential.

