

PRESS RELEASE  
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**First farm visit for primary children to Ditchingham Estate**  
**Local farm and estate is keen to forge greater links with nearby schools to help increase children's understanding of food and farming.**

On **Monday 16th May 2016** Year 1 and 2 children from Ditchingham Church of England Primary Academy, Bungay, Norfolk will get to explore nearby Ditchingham Estate. Although the estate is only a few miles away, it will be the first time the school have visited the Estate and excitement is high. The visit is being organised by national education charity The Country Trust who work to bring alive the working countryside for disadvantaged children from urban and other areas of high deprivation.

Ditchingham Estate are really keen to forge greater links with the school so that children gain a greater understanding of the countryside, farming. Julie Cole, Estate Manager says *"We are really looking forward to the visit and showing what happens on the Estate. It is really important that children learn about where food comes from and how it is grown and harvested together with a better understanding of the Countryside in which we live"*

There are a number of activities planned for the day and the children will learn about the cows on the farm, what breed they are and what they eat. They will also look at the crops including, oil seed rape and discover what it's used for. They will take part in a scavenger hunt, looking at what other wildlife lives on the farm such as bugs and voles, play 'leaf Snap' to look at different leaf shapes and try bark rubbing.

SENCo Teacher Maria Adcock says *"Everyone is so looking forward to this visit and seeing the crops, the farm animals and the wildlife on the Estate. We hope that learning outside the classroom will really inspire the children and teach them new things. Learning about food, farming and the countryside is vital to the school's curriculum."*

After a lunchtime picnic in the Estate wood the children will find out more about the history of the Estate from those who have been metal detecting and have been discovering artefacts and other things on the Estate for many years.

Mell Harrison, Farm Visit Co-ordinator for The Country Trust has been working hard to ensure all aspects of the visit will benefit the children. Mell says *"This will be an amazing opportunity for the children to see a real working farm up close and to learn how the food they see in shops and supermarket gets there. Increasingly children don't understand where food comes from and so visits like this are so important for their education."*

If you would like to know more about the work of The Country Trust or become a supporter, please go to [countrytrust.org.uk](http://countrytrust.org.uk)

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## Editors' notes

The visit will take place at :

**Date:** Monday 16 May 2016 **Time:** 9.30am - 2.15pm **Venue:** Ditchingham Estate, Norwich Road, NR35 2JL

For more information, please email Mell Harrison at [mharrison@countrytrust.org.uk](mailto:mharrison@countrytrust.org.uk) or call 07760 161755.

## About The Country Trust

- Founded in 1978, The Country Trust is the leading national educational charity that brings the working countryside alive for those children least able to access it, whether through disadvantage or disability. Every year we support hundreds of volunteer farmers and landowners to welcome thousands of disadvantaged children from all backgrounds and faiths onto their farms.
- The Country Trust has 3 main strands of activities:
  1. Farm Discovery - day visits to real working farms
  2. Countryside Discovery - residential visits to the countryside
  3. Food Discovery - yearlong programmes exploring every aspect of growing, cooking and even selling food
- The Country Trust focuses on working with the following:
  - Primary age children from schools with an above average percentage of children eligible for Free School Meals
  - Schools catering for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
  - Looked After Children and Pupil Referral Units
- In 2015 The Country Trust enabled
  - 17,961 children to go on a farm or estate visit
  - 6,600 children took part in farm led assemblies and food and farming workshops
  - 860 children took part in Food Discovery Programmes
  - 883 children went on 29 Residential visits
  - 415 children with Special Educational Needs took part in Countryside Adventure days in Hampshire.
- The Country Trust currently works with schools in and around London, East Anglia, Hampshire, Birmingham and the East and West Midlands, Yorkshire, the North West, North Wales and Northumberland.

## What we do

- We make it easy and safe for children to visit farms and for farmers to share their knowledge and passion.
- We bring urban and rural communities together, increasing communication, respect and understanding of the countryside as a place of possibilities but also a place on which livelihoods depend.
- We facilitate children's cultural understanding about the life and work of the British countryside through visits and talking with those who live and work there.
- We enable children to experience the wonder of the countryside:- open space, breathing space, the people who live and work there, habitats, farm animals and wildlife.
- We enable children to understand the possibilities of food, what a variety there is, why and how it grows, who grows it and where, what it tastes like, why all this matters.
- We introduce adult role models who nurture and take responsibility for crops and animals. People who often work in strong family units.
- We bring two interdependent but disconnected communities together for a stronger future. Our school community includes many urban children and a significant number of children from ethnic minorities.
- We can help schools to meet the new Ofsted common inspection framework which now includes a judgement on 'personal development, behaviour and welfare'. Ofsted states that the first-hand experiences of learning outside the classroom can help to make subjects more vivid and interesting for pupils and enhance their understanding. It can also contribute significantly to pupils' personal, social and emotional development.

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