

PRESS RELEASE
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Children have a top notch time at Tophouse Farm!
Thanks to funding from BASF, Hightown Junior & Infant School enjoy a Country Trust farm visit to Tophouse Farm, Rawcliffe Bridge.

On **Wednesday 15 June 2016**, Year 4 children from Hightown Junior & Infant School, Liversedge, West Yorkshire visited Tophouse Farm, Rawcliffe Bridge, experiencing the amazing variety of life found on a working farm. The visit was organised by national education charity, The Country Trust who are dedicated to bringing alive the working countryside for children least able to access it. This visit was funded by BASF, a leading provider of crop protection to farmers.

The children were guided on their visit by farmer James Hinchliffe and Graham Hartwell, Environmental Stewardship Manager, BASF plc, Crop Protection, who began the visit by showing them how wheat is grown. The children got the opportunity to separate wheat from chaff and to grind it into flour, in order to understand how the basic ingredient in bread is made. They also saw how other crops are grown on the farm including barley, oats, peas, field beans and linseed and were fascinated to discover the different types of food these are made into.

During their tour, the farm became a “living classroom” for the children and they had a unique opportunity to see first hand which crops encourage birds, bees and butterflies and why this is important to understanding life cycles, pollination and growth.

After a picnic lunch and a chance for games and a run around, the children had a walk through woodland, collecting and identifying leaves, hunting for butterflies and moths and listening to bird song. This encouraged the children to use all their senses during their visit taking in the sounds, sights and even the smells of the countryside!

Country Trust Farm Discovery Manager, Kay Whitfield says *“We are so grateful to BASF for funding this Country Trust visit. Visits like these are vital in providing children, who might otherwise rarely have the opportunity to visit the countryside, with hands-on learning experiences.”*

Graham Hartwell from BASF agrees, *“Learning and development is at the heart of our company and agriculture is an important part of our business, so supporting educational opportunities like this for young children makes perfect sense.”*

If you would like to know more about the work of The Country Trust or become a supporter, please go to www.countrytrust.org.uk

-Ends-

Editors' notes

Venue: Tophouse Farm, Rawcliffe Bridge, Nr Goole, East Yorkshire

Date: Wednesday 15 June 2016 **Time:** 10.00am

For more information, please email Kay Whitfield at kwhitfield@countrytrust.org.uk or call 07795 140221.

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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