

Anderton Park Primary school is a large inner-city primary school in Sparkhill, Birmingham. After hearing about the fantastic initiative of FaceTime a Farmer I was intrigued to know more. We felt that this was an amazing opportunity for the children in our school to learn not only about the world of farming but about British farming in particular. I felt it was so simple to get involved, especially after watching the FaceTime a Farmer videos at <https://leafuk.org/eating-and-living/facetime-a-farmer> and I even got to watch Farmer Tom on Facebook Live before our first call and that was really useful.

At Anderton Park we have signed up all year 3, 4, 5 and 6 teachers (around 400 pupils) to FaceTime a farmer and most of them have already held a number of fantastic Facetime calls with their link farmers, which vary from Dairy farmers, to Quinoa growers.

The children in our school have a very urban life and have only ever been to a petting farm when they were in reception. We wanted to see the impact that this opportunity had on our children, so initially we asked all classes to carry out a cold task where the children draw and write what they know about British farms and farming, unfortunately (though not surprisingly) this was very little. We felt that by doing this and revisiting it later in the year during Summer Term 2 it will show the progress that our pupils make and the positive impact that FaceTime a Farmer has had on them all, and us!

Most children thought that farms have 'pet animals' and 'grow some vegetables'. A few children mentioned where milk and eggs are from; but only a handful out of the 400 children knew where our meat comes from. Only one of the children knew the word "agriculture". One child said female cows give us milk. The children have no concept of size or numbers. One child said that farmers are 'very skilled'

Some of the comments from our pupils are:

"We are excited to see Farmer Rob and what he is doing each week."

"I like FaceTime a Farmer because it tells you about things that are happening outside Tv's and stuff so it gives you something else to be interested in"

"I like FaceTime a Farmer because you get to learn about farms, animals, crops, more about the animals and what the farmers have to do to give us our milk"

"I like FaceTime a Farmer because it helps me with my education and I love farming!"

A couple of questions our children have asked are:

'Do farms have windmills for renewable energy?'

*Which was great to hear Rob then discuss about the solar energy that he has on farm.*

'How much does it cost to make a pint of milk?'

Who encouraged you to be a farmer?

How long does it take for you to milk your cows?

During our first FaceTime with Rob Harrison our dairy farmer, from Greystone Farm in Chipping Campden, one of the children asked what a calf was. This really shocked me and when I asked the rest of the class, not many of them knew what they are either. Already we can see as a school the benefits that this is having on our children and their understanding of a world outside of their normal, local environment.

As a school we have now decided to take this a step further still and we will be running a British farming week in June where we will celebrate and use our older students to teach the younger years what we've learnt about British farms. We have found FACE (Farming and Countryside Education) and LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) very useful in signposting where to find further information for us and their Regional Education Consultant Brian has been very helpful in linking us to other local farms for us to take the children out on to. This will then lead nicely into LEAF Open Farm Sunday, which we are promoting as a school to get our parents to learn more on 10<sup>th</sup> June this year – when local farms open up to the public. Many of the children involved in Facetime a Farmer will also be visiting a working farm which will be another great experience for them.; this again has been a real benefit of FaceTime a farmer as Farmer Rob has invited our whole class to visit him on farm.

We will definitely build our relationships as we continue this year and next as there are so many benefits which include learning about where our food comes from, rural landscapes, understanding the different jobs involved in farming, renewable energy, healthy eating and a great focus for British values. A more unexpected impact on our children has been on their literacy with new key words being used by our farmers and in our follow up conversations with our classes and numeracy has also been a focus too especially around size and scale. We are so pleased that we signed up to FaceTime a Farmer and would recommend other schools to sign up and get involved!

Miss F. Edwards,  
Year 4 Teacher



