



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 16th July 11 am

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School in Alcester launched as food and farming Demonstration School

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School has been recognised by leading agricultural education charity, LEAF Education, for its exemplary work in using food, farming and the countryside across its curriculum.

The Warwickshire based primary school receives the bronze level award, for its commitment to using food production, farming and the countryside as part of its broad and balanced curriculum. The school have made a tremendous effort to embed food, farming and the environment into their curriculum through a range of initiatives, firstly linking up with Oversley Hill Farm & Forest where they met farmer Amy Bates and her animals, find out what is growing in the fields local to them and understand better where their food comes from. During the past year, Our Lady's ran a harvest festival, gardening competitions and teamed up with LEAF Education consultants, Brian Hainsworth and Elizabeth Lake, to take part in interactive workshops investigating the importance of good soil health in battling climate change.

As part of their Covid recovery programme, each class paid weekly visits, for a half a term, to the 'Heart of England Forest' outdoor learning facility at Middle Spenal Farm. More recently Years 4 and 5 took part in a 'Chef on the Farm' event at Mount Pleasant School Farm where the children learned from chef Idris Caldora from the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts how to cook healthy meals and further understand food production from farm to fork. Meanwhile, volunteers and 6th Form students from St. Benedict's High school are bringing a new sensory garden to life and with the help of the Woodland Trust and local donations, children look forward to planting more trees in their forest school, on site, this Autumn.

Mrs Maggie Gourlay, Head at Our Lady's Catholic School, said:

"We are so proud to be awarded the status of Demonstration School; it is a fitting endorsement for what we are also trying to achieve at Our Lady's. As part of promoting a healthy lifestyle, our mission is to develop a love for outdoor learning, skills to grow produce and knowledge to make good food choices. This alliance with LEAF Education has helped enrich the children's appreciation of local farming and respect for the environment. I would strongly encourage other schools and youth groups to get involved with them".

Carl Edwards, Director of Education and Public Engagement at LEAF Education added:

"We are delighted to launch this pioneering new programme of Demonstration Schools, focussing specifically on food production and farming education. Much evidence shows that providing young people with opportunities to learn about how their food is produced and where it comes from has huge positive impacts in terms of promoting health and well-being, raising awareness of issues around climate change, environmental protection, population growth and sustainability.

"Farming is relevant to every aspect of the curriculum. We want to shine a light on schools that are leading the way in embedding farming into their teaching and support them in developing a whole school ethos. Our Lady's is doing some exciting and imaginative work in this area and we are thrilled to welcome them as a Demonstration School.

"Our aim is to work alongside our Demonstration Schools and the wider farming and education sectors to set the highest standards in agricultural education provision."

LEAF REC Elizabeth Lake concluded:

"LEAF Education is all about sharing best practice, encouraging innovation and driving forward real improvements in how young people connect with their food, where it comes from and make healthy and sustainable food choices. I am really looking forward to working further in partnership with Our Lady's School by helping them through Action Research to develop a well-rounded and successful community that has a unique sense of its place and understands the importance of protecting the environment for future generations."

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School will be launched as a LEAF Education Demonstration School on Friday 16th July.

For more information, visit education.leafuk.org/for-schools/leaf-education-demo-schools

Ends

Notes to Editors

Photo Opportunity available on Friday 11th July at 11.00am

At Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, St Faith's Road, Alcester B49 6AG (Tel 01789 762555)

For more information please contact:

Cat Cambridge / David Gough

Justine Hards

LEAF Press Office – Ceres

LEAF

T: 01189 475 956

T: 02476 413911

E : leaf@ceres-pr.co.uk

E: Justine.hards@leafuk.org

Editors' Notes:

- LEAF Education works to inspire future generations about farming, food and the countryside. It provides teachers with curriculum focused training, tools and resources to help them deliver high-quality learning experiences about farming. It also helps farmers navigate the world of education and supports them in delivering inspiring and engaging on-farm and in-classroom activities.
- LEAF Education manages a number of industry and educational initiatives, including Access to Farms, CEVAS (Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme), Countryside Classroom, Chef on the Farm and LEAF Open Farm School Days.
- LEAF Education is part of LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) – a leading global organisation delivering more sustainable food and farming. LEAF is a registered charity number: 1045781

For more information see www.leafuk.org/education and www.leafuk.org