

Farmer Time Case Study

Sheep Case Study



The Farmer

Chris Foster is a sheep farmer from Lincolnshire with a flock of pedigree Texel and Suffolk sheep. In addition to this he is a farm contractor on mainly arable farms. From a farming background, Chris is an enthusiastic supporter of increasing public engagement in agriculture.

The School

Thrussington CE Primary School is a small rural school in Leicestershire. Learning from the environment is already an integral part of the curriculum: the school site includes agricultural plots for the cultivation of plants, fruit and vegetables and a forest school.

Focus on the Teacher – Jo Berry

Where did you hear about Farmer Time?

I first heard about Farmer Time whilst on an Early Years Number Sense course at Leicester University. One teacher mentioned that she had taken part in a Farmer Time session and how much the children had enjoyed it. I googled it when I got back to school and signed up to the initiative.

How do you prepare for each session?

Initially, I contacted our matched farmer and we communicated via email. First, we asked the class if they had any questions they would like to ask. I then emailed these across to Christopher so he was prepared. We then had a tester Skype session so we could check all equipment and signals worked before we involved the class. We are extremely lucky being matched with Christopher Foster as he often emails informing me when he is doing certain things that the children might be interested in. These have included preparing sheep for a show, looking around a farm, spraying crops in the field, weighing sheep and treating for maggots and flies.

How is each session structured?

We are lucky to have Skype sessions at least every half term, if not more regularly. Christopher has also sent videos during the half term holiday of the sheep being sheared so the children did not miss experiences. The children will ask questions at the end of each session and these are normally linked to previous sessions and follow up work.

What have the children learned so far?

The children (we have Early Years, Year 1 and Year 2) are learning so much! Even though we are a small village school in a rural area, the LEAF initiative brings real life farming experiences into the classroom. The children are more aware that working farms are much more than 'seeing animals' like they would see if they visited a farm park. They are more aware of where their food comes from and what farmers may do on a day to day basis. They have also become more aware of the fact that there are different types of farms and that some farms may only have one type of animal or even no animals at all, just crops. It is inspiring a new generation of farmers!



In addition, the children enjoyed being famous! Radio 4 covered the story of Farmer Time - the pure joy and excitement on the children's faces when they heard themselves on the radio was priceless!

I have found that all the sessions can be linked to so many areas of the curriculum from science to mathematics.

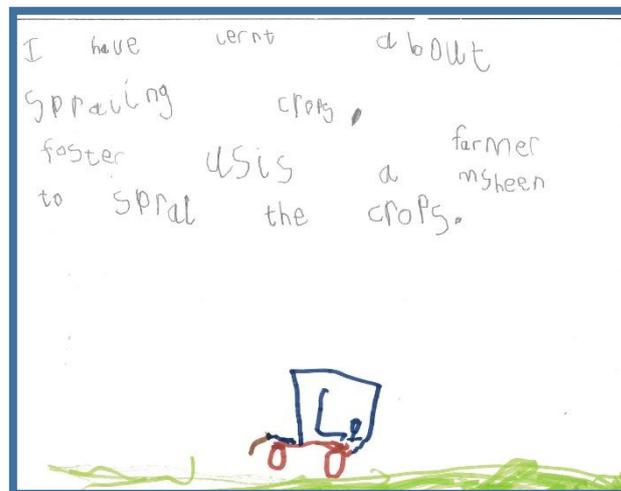
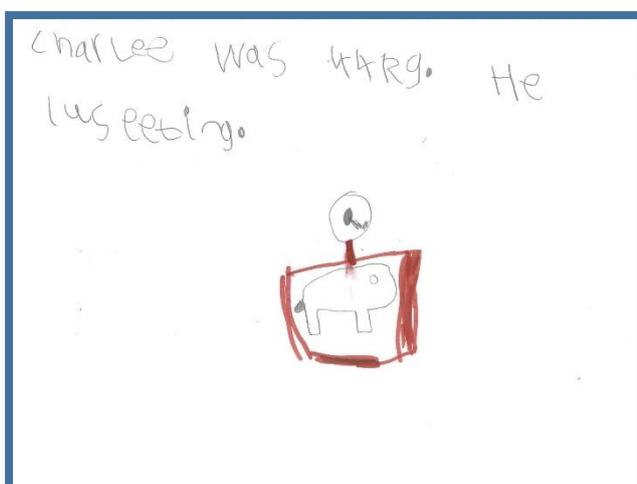
Has anything surprised you about the initiative?

I do believe we are extremely lucky to have been matched with Christopher Foster. He is very passionate about his job and this comes across to the children. He is keen to extend and challenge children's thinking and knowledge. Farming is being brought into the classroom and it is lovely to see the children excited and keen to find out more each session. Christopher uses the correct language and terms (e.g. for chemicals and products used) which is great for children's understanding. I am surprised with how well the initiative has gone and we are all learning together.

Have you done any follow up work in the classroom linked to curriculum learning?

Early Years (children aged 4 - 5 years) have written about what they have learnt so far and why they like Skyping with Farmer Foster. We are keeping a record in our class learning journey each time we have a Skype session. We print photos from the session and the Year 1 and 2 children record what has been happening on the farm, showing evidence of new learning and recall of events. We are planning to link the

sessions to Geography and Understanding the World as we use google maps and to find where Farmer Foster is working (as he travels to various farms)



The Impact

Jo is so enthusiastic about the Farmer Time initiative, "Being able to bring real life farming experiences into the classroom is such an asset to the children's learning. The children are engaged and motivated to learn about life on a farm and the jobs that a farmer does."

Her pupils agree!

Adam (aged 5) "Farmer Foster is a superhero and is amazing"

Isaac (aged 6) "I like to see what he's doing, his jobs each day."

Jack (aged 7) "I like it that he always has an answer to our questions."

Christopher enjoys the sessions just as much as Jo and her class, "Farmer Time is rewarding for all parties involved as it not only promotes the industry to a receptive audience, but also allows the children to experience a whole new area of learning."

Further information about this initiative and how your school or farm can become involved can be found at www.farmertime.org

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Thank you to **Thrussington CE Primary and Christopher Foster**