



Information Pack for Secondary Schools



www.learningfarm.co.uk



Learning Farm

Learning Farm uses the outdoor classroom to spark student's curiosity about the world around them. This promotes the development of scientific, social, historical and personal understanding. We provide hands-on, safe and active learning with real experiences which enhance creativity and experimentation. Covering a number of National Curriculum subjects including science, geography, art & design, history and design & technology we help students to refine their practical and enquiry skills.

What you can do at Learning Farm

Our outdoor classroom provides a wide variety of learning possibilities with many different habitats, insects, birds and other wildlife, agricultural crops, natural resources and features of historical interest. For more detailed study on these topics we have basic laboratory facilities and art resources in the field study centre.

We can offer specialist study in the following areas:

- 🌿 Conservation & wildlife habitats
- 🌿 Crops and food
- 🌿 Weather
- 🌿 Soils & Water
- 🌿 Renewable energy
- 🌿 History & archaeology

To find out more about what we can offer in these areas see our web site and follow links from the School Visits page under Curriculum Links.

Secondary school field study options at Learning Farm

We can tailor any visit to your requirements but these are some of the potential National Curriculum linked areas of study. All areas of study promote team building as students need to work together to complete games and exercises that are incorporated in the visit.

Organisms and their behaviour in the environment

Ecological Relationships

Students survey and explore a habitat including hedgerow, pond, grassland, woodland or stream. Students learn how to make predictions, sample and collect data, present and interpret these data and identify & classify organisms. Use of ecological monitoring tools including sweep nets, pooters, pitfall traps and quadrats are an integral part of the study.

Animal survey

Introduction to investigating animal ecology including small mammal surveys, microscope investigation of pond water or soil, owl pellet dissection and food chains.



Materials and their properties & the earth

-  Soil science
Students study different soils in the field and under the microscope, measure bulk density, organic matter content etc and look at different properties in terms of water retention and pH
-  Exploring a stream environment
An opportunity to follow a stream studying changes in channel characteristics and investigating the human use of this stream and potential conflicts. Students experience first hand the processes of erosion, transportation and deposition from the bankside and standing in the water. Practical study of the stream includes measuring water flow, stream depth and channel characteristics at different points.
-  Earth & space
An introduction to Geographical Positioning Systems where students can sample micro-climate (temp, rel. humidity, wind speed, solar lux) or soil parameters on different geographically referenced parts of the farm. These data can be used to create maps and explore environmental heterogeneity.
-  Orienteering & map reading
Students take part in an orienteering activity completing challenges around the course. They collect data to help them consider how the environment changes naturally and through human interaction

Energy & technology

-  Renewable energy
Students see a range of wood fuelled heating systems, learn about district heating systems, modern boiler technology and woodland management for woodfuel. Solar thermal heating and solar photovoltaic electricity production is demonstrated with a visit to see a small scale wind turbine if the group has transport available.

History & Archaeology

-  Owston Abbey and fishponds Scheduled Ancient Monument, along with the existing Owston Church provides a marvellous opportunity for historical enquiry into medieval history. Highly visible earthworks clearly show the complex water systems designed by the Abbey monks and information and data from a Time Team investigation of the site allows students to use evidence in their study. A project surrounding Owston Abbey provides material for students to develop their skills in interpretation and communicating about the past.

Other opportunities on the farm include dating Parish boundary hedgerows and field walking for Romano-British pottery remains.

Art and design

- There are many opportunities to do art projects within the natural environment using whatever the farm has to offer from leaves, seeds, berries and grass heads, to pond clay, dead wood and soil or stones. This allows students to be creatives, take risks, explore and experiment. It also allows them to develop their research and investigative skills working from first hand observation.



Citizenship and Local food

- All areas of study at Learning Farm integrate some aspects of the Citizenship study programme key concepts and processes. Food production provides a brilliant topic to cover all of the key processes. Whilst learning about locally produced crops and produce, processing and making food (i.e. wheat to bread) students can enter the topical debate about healthy eating, eating local, the Common Agricultural Policy and trade with other countries. Exploring different viewpoints this project could be followed up with students taking informed and responsible action and justifying this to others to bring about change within their school or community.

We have covered the main areas of study at learning farm that link with the National Curriculum but there are many links with all curriculum subjects as shown in the diagram below. Learning Farm also promotes Personal Learning and Thinking Skills allowing students to develop as independent enquirers, creative thinkers, team workers, self managers, effective participators and reflective learners.

Curriculum Links for visits to Learning Farm

Art & Design

Using nature in design – printing, models, painting, sculpture
Nature/animal photography
Natural dyes

Citizenship & PSHE

Where our food comes from
Growing your own food
Renewable energy – solar & biomass

Design & Technology

Automatic weather monitoring
Biomass heating systems & solar heating
Animal feed mixing plant
GPS and GIS in farm cropping

English

Topical issues – organic farming, conserving wildlife, renewable energy
Writing farming/gardening diary
Animal stories/poems



Physical Education

Farm walk
Hill rolling

Science

Crop husbandry, Integrated management, chemical use, minimal tillage, plant nutrients
Pond dipping and identification of freshwater invertebrates with magnifying pots and microscopes
Habitats and wildlife, habitat management
Soil science
Seasonal changes, weather, water cycle
Food chains and ecosystems
Birds and identification of species
Plant and insect identification, use of keys

Geography

GPS and GIS in farm cropping, soil management, fertiliser application
Human influences on the farmed environment.
Soil science & basic soil testing
Water cycle



History

Scheduled Ancient Monument of Augustinian Abby and fish pond earthworks
History of farming and traditional management techniques

Religious Education

Harvest festival
Augustinian Abby links and history of church in Owston

Mathematics

Measuring weather and graphical interpretation
Measuring growth in crops
Collecting ecological data
Water flow in streams

ICT

Farm maps and crop recording
Electronic weather data for graphical display
GPS and GIS

Music

Birdsong and sounds of nature
Natural instruments

Farm information

Farm name: Manor Farm, Owston

Farm address: Manor Farm, Main Street, Owston, Oakham, Leicestershire. LE15 8DH

Contact person: Saya Sheridan

Tel no: 01664 454401

Mobile no: 07919 353352

Email: saya@learningfarm.co.uk

Website: www.learningfarm.co.uk

Booking a visit

Please contact Saya to discuss your requirements and to book a visit. We have some funding available for 2 hour visits which you may be eligible for.

How to get here

Manor Farm is in the middle of the village of Owston, immediately opposite the point where middle street meets main street. At this T-junction turn right and enter the farm yard through the yard gate that is half way down the hill on the left hand side. A location map can be printed from our website.

On arrival

When you arrive at Manor Farm there is room in the farm yard for buses and/or cars to park and turn around. Someone will meet you on the road side near the farm entrance and point out a suitable parking place. When the students are off the bus or out of cars then the group will assemble in the farm yard near the farm house where toilets are available.

Facilities

We have toilets and hand washing facilities as well as a field studies room in the farm yard. The field studies room is heated and provides a good place for picnics if it is too cold or wet to be outside. It is also used for doing more detailed study linked to the visit and if the weather is truly awful then the whole visit can take place inside. Disabled access toilets are available but disabled access around the farm is limited.

Risk Assessment

We have risk assessments available for all activities at Learning Farm, please enquire.