



Case study

Oathall Community College

Schools' Challenge – Food and Farming Project

Howard Wood





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Specialist Schools
and Academies Trust
EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY

Background

Oathall is a mixed 1,400 pupil comprehensive community college located in the heart of Mid-Sussex. Oathall is designated a specialist college in an innovative and creative combination of specialisms; science and visual arts with a rural dimension. The college has a full spectrum of specialist accommodation, including a 5-acre farm, a music centre, recently opened specialist art building, conference facilities and well-equipped classrooms.

The project

1. What were you trying to achieve for your learners through the curriculum?

- To reconnect children and young people with food by showing them where their food comes from
- To provide children and young people with an understanding of the stages of food production

2. How did you organise the learning to achieve your aims for learners

The farm and gardens at Oathall are used as a resource to enhance and enrich the curriculum in most subject areas such as mathematics, science, humanities, art, ICT and English:



Mathematics – Year 7 Lamb project database/Year 11 Statistics work

Science – Year 7 Adaptation of animals to food source

– Year 8 Pond Studies

– Year 9 Control system in a glasshouse

– Year 10 Microbes in the milking parlour

– Year 11 Selective breeding

ICT

– Students produce visitor guides for a variety of audiences.

3. How well are you achieving your aim?

- Twenty-five students from Oathall went to Highgrove to meet HRH Prince of Wales at the launch of the Year of Food and Farming in September 2007. The students learnt how to





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harvest wheat, grind corn and make bread, before pulling organic carrots during the launch

- Students developed an area for crop growing as an extension to the farm trail that forms part of the farm visits offered at Oathall. During the Year, local primary schools visited Oathall to experience wheat growing and animals first-hand
- During the Year Oathall extended its farm operations to include a farm shop to showcase the farm produce including Oathall Real Sausages and Burgers and Oathall Real Lamb. Students helped to salvage materials that were used to build the farm shop
- Students at Oathall built their own compost bays in 2008 in order to recycle green waste material for use on the gardens. The students have also developed an enterprising aspect whereby the plants and hanging baskets planted and grown by them are sold to raise funds to support the college farm and garden

4. What does the school plan to do next year?

- To continue with the development of the college farm and gardens to support teaching and learning in all curriculum areas
- To host visits for more primary schools to provide them with hands-on experience of growing, cooking and farming activities