



# FARMS FOR CITY CHILDREN



Impact Report 2024-25

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## Donate

There are so many ways you can make a difference. Setting up a regular gift, leaving a gift in your will, taking on a challenge or supporting our work through your company or foundation will all help us make a positive impact on the lives of young people.

### Make a donation or set up a regular gift today

Scan your phone's camera over this QR code, visit [farmsforcitychildren.org/donate](https://farmsforcitychildren.org/donate) or view alternative donation methods on page 14.



## Why our work matters

### Recent research underscores the importance of Farms for City Children's work.

Last year, Natural England reported that 91% of children and young people surveyed agreed with the statement 'being in nature makes me very happy'.

Yet opportunities to access time in nature, outdoor learning and school-led enrichment activities are shrinking, particularly for children in households experiencing financial strain.

Within this context, we pledged to deliver three outcomes for children and young people as a result of their time on our farms.

Our pledged outcomes:

**Increased learning and engagement.**  
**Improved connections and wellbeing.**  
**Enhanced environmental citizenship.**

This report sets out how we have met those pledges during the academic year 2024-25.

# 18%

of children living in deprived areas have **never visited the natural environment.**<sup>1</sup>

Nearly half of primary schools in England have reported **cutting spending on school trips and enrichment activities** due to the cost-of-living crisis.<sup>2</sup>

# 35%

In 35% of schools surveyed, pupils will **not experience any outdoor learning.**<sup>5</sup>

# 60%

of households experiencing financial strain reported they were **struggling to afford school trips.**<sup>3</sup>

# 1 in 5

Around 1 in 5 children and young people have a **probable mental health condition.**<sup>4</sup>

More than 1 in 5 children with a probable mental health condition had a parent who **could not afford for their child to take part in activities outside school.**<sup>3</sup>

1 Natural England: Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (2019)

2 NFER: Cost of living crisis: Impact on Schools (2023)

3 The Children's Society: The Good Childhood Report (2024)

4 NHS: Mental Health of Children and Young People in England (2023)

5 WWF: Schools for Nature (2022)





# Welcome

**At Farms for City Children, we believe every young person, regardless of background, deserves an opportunity to take home the wealth of benefits of being farmers for a week.**

During a five-day school or group visit to one of our stunning farms in Devon, Gloucestershire or Pembrokeshire, children and young people grow and thrive. Our immersive programme enhances learning, nurtures wellbeing and builds transferable skills as our young farmers grow lasting connections with nature, food and farming.

We are delighted to share highlights of a truly remarkable year and, most importantly, the impact that has had on the children and young people who have spent weeks with us during that time.

We are extremely proud of what we have achieved during the course of 2024-25. Despite ever-increasing pressures on school and household budgets, a record number of children and young people have been able to experience a transformative week on one of our farms. We have extended our reach to new schools and community groups, engaging young farmers aged 8 to 19 from across England and Wales.

We have welcomed hundreds of people from our local communities to the farms through our events and were thrilled to host a very special visit for our patron, HRH the Princess Royal at our Lower Treginnis farm.

Our commitment to nature-friendly farming and sustainable operating practices has seen us develop new habitats, increase biodiversity and make practical progress in reducing our consumption and impact.

This year we bade a fond farewell to our former Chief Executive Donna Edmonds and will begin 2025-26 welcoming her successor, Corinna Csaky, who joins us in September 2025. We are excited to see how Corinna's leadership will guide us into a new era of expansion and outreach, enabling even more children and young people to benefit from the life-changing experience of being farmers for a week.



Finally, none of the incredible outcomes you'll find in this report would be possible without the passion, commitment and support of our staff, volunteers, trustees and funders. We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to you all.

**Rachel Gault, Chair of Trustees**



# Increased learning and engagement

**Outdoor learning experiences provide a relevance and depth to the curriculum in ways that can be difficult to achieve in the classroom.**

Learning in nature through hands-on tasks provides opportunities to be adventurous and creative. It gives children and young people the chance to step out of comfort zones and challenge themselves.

Our visiting farmers build knowledge and understanding alongside developing life skills that will serve them both inside the classroom and in their wider lives.

A week on one of our farms not only grows motivation for learning once children and young people have returned to school; it provides knowledge and experiences that will be remembered for a lifetime.

This year, thanks to support from the Ernest Cook Trust, we have forged new long-term partnerships with two schools with whom we work at greater depth. With this support, we have embedded food, farming and outdoor learning as part of a whole school approach.

76%

of children and young people said they know more about **where their food comes from.**

72%

of children and young people said they had a better **“not giving up” attitude** than before.

100%

of our school and group leaders said that their farm residential had a **good or outstanding impact** on their young people's development of a **growth mindset.**



**“I used to be scared to do new things. I was kind of scared to milk the goats, but I realised if you don't try something you don't know how good it would be. And even if you don't like it, it was good that you tried.”**



**Pupil, Canonbury Primary School, Islington**

**“The staff motivated all of our learners, regardless of their abilities and prior knowledge, and made them feel safe even if they made mistakes.**

As a result, every single child and adult has learnt something new. Children who can struggle to maintain engagement in the classroom setting really came into their own. This was a pleasure for us to see as their teachers. Every single child came away with new knowledge and an appreciation for farming!”



**Lead teacher, Charles Dickens Primary School, Southwark**





## Improved connections and wellbeing

**Time in nature has a wealth of well-documented wellbeing benefits. We see these realised daily on our farms.**

Our visiting young farmers are given an invaluable opportunity to decompress from daily life, disconnect from the digital world and boost their physical and emotional health.

Farm tasks boost confidence, teamwork skills and resilience, creating opportunities to achieve

outside the classroom. Natural crafts, nature walks and mindfulness sessions give children and young people the space to be in the moment, as well as tools to support their own wellbeing in the future.

Through having time to share experiences together, connections are renewed and deepened, supporting improved engagement and behaviour upon returning to the classroom.

**100%**

of our school and group leaders said that their farm residential had a good or outstanding impact on their young people's social connections.

**100%**

of our school and group leaders said that their farm residential had a good or outstanding impact on reducing their young people's reliance on technology and digital devices.

**100%**

of our school and group leaders said that their farm residential had a good or outstanding impact on young people's physical activity.

**78%**

of children and young people said they made new friends or got to know their friends better.

**“I really enjoyed just being able to stop, because we don't have our phones on us.**

You have loads of moments where you just look at the beautiful scenery, and it's like, why would I need my phone? And it really breaks down how important getting out is really.”



**Pupil,  
Wey Valley Academy, Weymouth**



# Enhanced environmental citizenship

**A week at one of our farms inspires children to engage with the natural world around them and connect with where their food comes from.**

They learn through caring for livestock, planting and harvesting produce and enjoying tasty, nutritious food that they have helped to grow and prepare.

By being actively involved in nature-friendly farming practices during their time on the farm, children and young people absorb vital knowledge about environmental conservation, biodiversity and climate protection.

Children and young people leave our farms with an enhanced feeling of connection to the natural world, a greater sense of its value and a clear understanding of the role they play in caring for it.



**100%**

of our school and group leaders said that their farm residential had a good or outstanding impact on their young people's awareness of nature.

**99%**

of our school and group leaders said that their farm residential had a good or outstanding impact on their young people's understanding of the farm to fork journey.

**"Taking responsibility for one's environment is a great foundation for getting on in life and it runs through everything that you do."**

The experience the children received is such a contrast to their lives in London and so the world has been made that little bit bigger for all of them."



**Lead teacher,  
Crampton Primary School, Southwark**





“

**A wholesome week where lifetime memories have been formed and will be cherished by all.**

Pupils we thought would find being out of routine and away from parents difficult have flourished and shown a level of perseverance not shown in school.



**Lead teacher, Milford Haven Community Primary School, Milford Haven**

”

“Lots of hard work goes into the foods we eat and take for granted, and we should appreciate the hard work of the people that do the things for us.”

**Pupil, St George and St Teresa, Solihull**

“

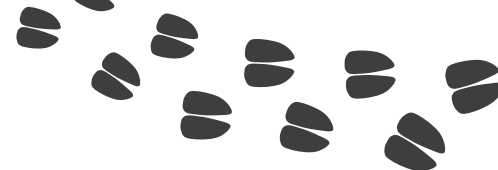
**The children have learned so much about themselves through trying things they were afraid of or uncomfortable about doing.**

I've been amazed at how brave the children have been - every single one has done something they were afraid of or uncomfortable with, from trying new foods, to handling animals to staying away from parents for the first time.



**Lead teacher, Canonbury Primary School, Islington**

”



“Children should have the right to have peace and quiet, rather than being in a loud place where everything's loud; engines, pollution like, it's not a good place for children.”

**Pupil, Kelvin Grove Primary School, Lewisham**

**Being outdoors makes me feel more confident and relaxed.**



**Pupil, King's Academy Bay House School, Gosport**

“

**It has been an incredible opportunity to think about how to approach outdoor learning tasks.**

The staff team have led by example and been so positive and maintained a really good sense of humour. Every day is a fun filled action packed day focusing on care, compassion and healthy energy.



**Lead teacher, Friars Primary Foundation School, Southwark**

”

# What our schools & groups tell us...



# Our year in numbers

Total number of children  
and young people:

3,553

Total number of schools and  
groups that visited our farms:

116

Total number of  
accompanying adults:

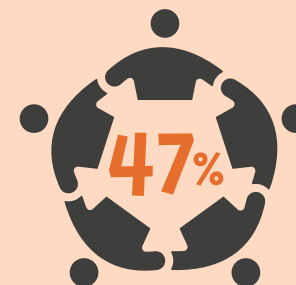
482

37%

of visiting children  
and young people  
entitled to pupil  
premium funding.

3,396

children and  
young people  
from school  
groups.



of beneficiaries have  
minority ethnic heritage.\*



157

children and  
young people  
from youth and  
community  
groups.





## Where our beneficiaries come from

**48%**

of beneficiaries were from the

**30%**

most deprived areas in England and Wales.



**97%**

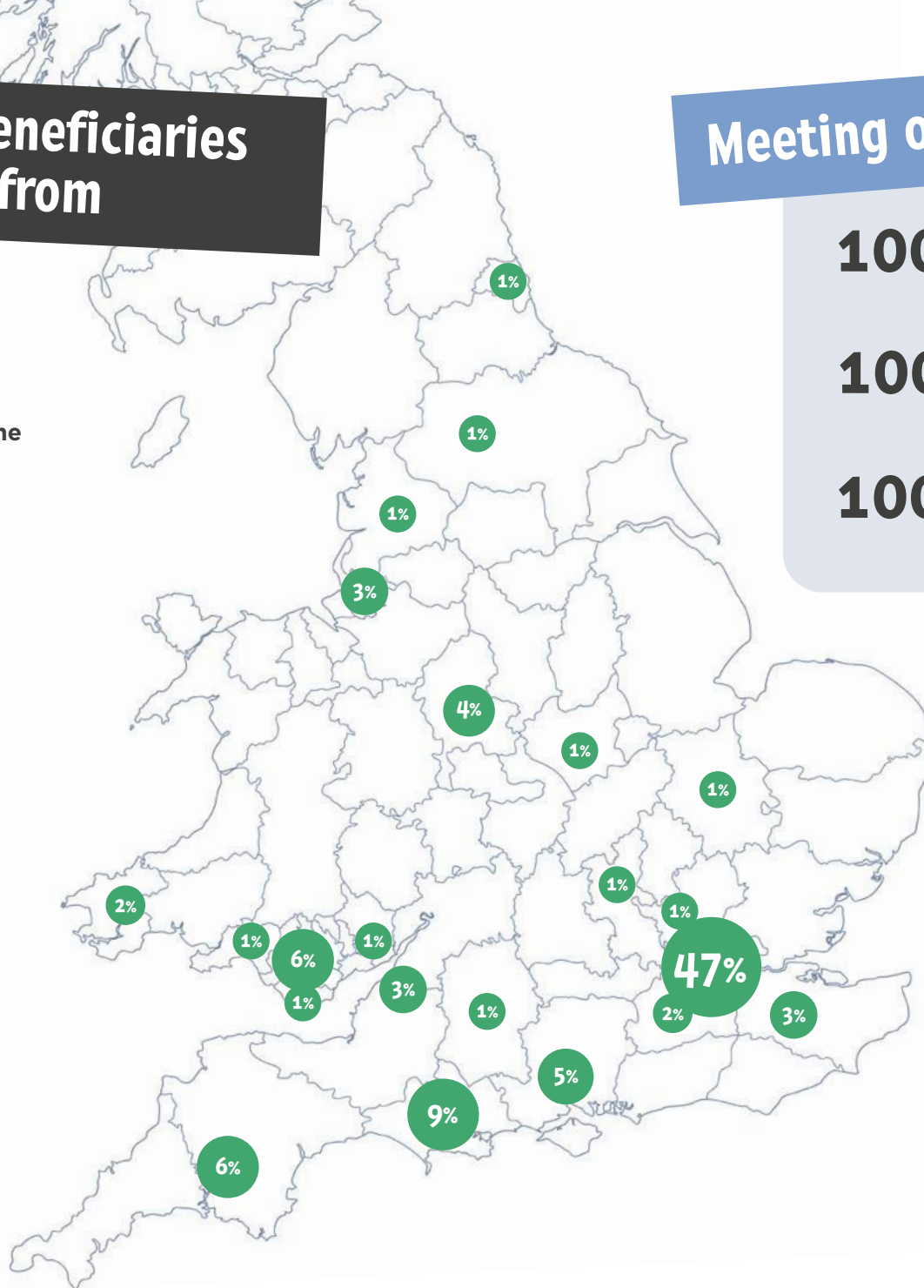
of school beneficiaries came from urban areas.



**52**

school and community groups from

**GREATER LONDON.**



## Meeting our pledged outcomes

**100%**

of lead adults said the farm visit met or exceeded our pledge to increase **learning and engagement**.

**100%**

of lead adults said that young people's **social connections and wellbeing** were improved as a result of the visit.

**100%**

of lead adults said that children and young people left with an **enhanced sense of environmental citizenship**.

## Legacy of visit

**The visit has made me more aware of the benefits of outdoor learning.**

We have tried to make opportunities to get outside in more areas of the curriculum, for example, a local area geography study and visits to the beach and surrounding areas.



**Six-week post-visit teacher feedback, St John's Primary School, Gosport**





## FARM NEWS

# LOWER TREGINNIS

38

primary and  
secondary  
schools.

3

community  
groups.

1,248

children and young  
people spent a  
week on our farm.

**We have enjoyed a productive and rewarding year at Lower Treginnis, hosting 42 weeks of bookings and making exciting developments to our farm and nature education offer.**

Our activity programme has been enhanced by the introduction of birdwatching, with a focus on building observation and listening skills, alongside nature-connection. Local partners continued to enrich the experience of visiting children and young people, including sessions from Câr-y-Môr - the UK's first community-owned seaweed and shellfish farm, illustrator Jackie Morris and Children's Laureate for Wales, Nicola Davies.

The number of Welsh schools visiting the farm increased again this year, supported by our collaboration with the Ernest Cook Trust's outdoor learning programme and our local fundraisers, the Friends of Treginnis.

As well as our traditional school groups, we have welcomed children and young people from a diverse range of community groups and programmes. This summer saw our first Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award residential, with 17 young people making an invaluable contribution to vital farm maintenance projects.

We have begun working in partnership with the National Trust to explore ways that we can create richer habitats and boost biodiversity on our land.

Finally, this year has seen some memorable events, including a very special visit from the charity's patron, Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal. In June, we were delighted to open our gates for Open Farm Sunday for the first time in a number of years, giving over a hundred visitors from the surrounding community a taste of the magic of the Farms for City Children experience.



**"To quote a child 'we are having the time of our life'. This is a unique life changing experience that cannot be replicated; we are learning skills to last a lifetime."**



**Lead teacher,  
Moorland Primary School, Cardiff**



## FARM NEWS



# NETHERCOTT HOUSE

**34**

primary and  
secondary schools.

**1**

FE college.

**2**

community  
groups.

**1,166**

children and young  
people spent a week  
on our farm.

**2024-25 has been a very fruitful year at Nethercott House with so many children experiencing life on a farm and some exciting new developments to our offer.**

As well as residential visits for primary and secondary schools, we have welcomed back young people from NESCOL college and two new cohorts of Duke of Edinburgh participants. It has been wonderful to see young farmers of all ages thriving during their week of practical farm to fork learning and time in nature.

Support from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme has also enabled us to host day visits for younger pupils from local schools, offering them a practical and fun introduction to nature-friendly farming.

We have made operational improvements at Burrow Farm as a result of a generous grant from the Phoebe Wortley-Talbot Charitable Trust. This funding also

supported the creation of a new wetland habitat and traditional orchard, boosting biodiversity and further enriching the learning experiences we offer.

The farm has provided a venue for the Woodland Trust and members of the Devon Wildlife Trust to undertake training in agroforestry and nature-friendly farming practices respectively. Our volunteers continue to provide invaluable support to the farm team, helping us produce fruit and vegetables for the house as well as preparing tasks for visiting children for the week ahead.

Once again, our annual Christmas Tree Festival, Festive Feast and Open Garden events have offered a wonderful opportunity to welcome supporters and members of our local community. We have also been able to take the farm out into the local area, proudly showcasing our produce and native breed Dartmoor sheep at produce and livestock shows.





## FARM NEWS

**We are proud to report another year of growth at Wick Court, increasing our reach and enriching our programme offer to support an increasingly diverse range of beneficiaries.**

We have extended a warm welcome to more children and young people from the north of England, with schools visiting us from West Yorkshire, Lancashire and Sunderland. Our youth group and secondary school offer has been developed to maximise the benefits of time on the farm for older and harder-to-engage young people.

With support from the Ernest Cook Trust's outdoor learning programme, we have also been able to deliver outreach activities at a new partner school, for those who could not attend the residential week itself.

Our work to protect and enhance our natural environment has included native hedge planting and splitting the size of grazing fields to increase biodiversity. We have developed our produce room to help us minimise garden waste alongside reducing use of plastics and moving to more environmentally-friendly cleaning products in our house and kitchen.

2024-25 has been a strong year for volunteering at Wick Court, thanks to the combination of the expansion of our regular long-term volunteer team plus fourteen days of volunteer working parties from the charity's corporate partners.

Our annual Open Farm Sunday event in June was another great success, with over 450 members of the public enjoying a day on our farm achieving a record amount of fundraising income. Away from the farm, we have been actively engaging with the NFU AgriFutures Challenge Events to support improved diversity in the wider agricultural sector, with learning proving invaluable to the charity's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) work.

# 1,139

children and young people spent a week on our farm.

# 35

primary and secondary schools.

# 3

community groups.



**“I’m most proud of me getting closer to my friends and getting a better understanding of how hard it is to farm.”**




**Pupil, Old Oak Primary School, Hammersmith & Fulham**




# What our schools & groups tell us...

**The children have learnt so much, so easily. They have been so keen to take part in everything that they haven't realised how much they are learning.**

It has been hard work but also really relaxing for them! The children have a greater understanding of how and why they should care for the environment and where their food comes from. An amazing week of fun, adventure and learning in such a brilliant environment."


 **Lead teacher, Hermitage Primary School, Tower Hamlets**

**"I feel like it's made us feel happier, getting out early and doing stuff. Making a better person for myself."**

 **Pupil, Southmoor Academy, Sunderland**




**"Being outdoors makes me feel connected to the world we live in and curious about the rest of the world."**

 **Pupil, Hollymount School, Merton**

"I did not realise how much the farm can help children open their mind and try new experiences"

**Lead adult, Walton Youth Community Group, Liverpool**

**Our children have made excellent bonds with one another as a result of the excellent activities, challenges and support from dedicated staff.**

 **Lead adult, Thornhill Junior and Infant School, Kirklees**



# Looking to the year ahead

**We look ahead to 2025-26 with great excitement, not least because it will see us celebrating a major milestone for Farms for City Children; our 50th anniversary.**

Since the charity was founded by Clare and Michael Morpurgo in 1976, 104,500 children and young people have experienced a life-changing week on one of our farms.

We will ensure that 2026 provides a springboard into fifty more successful years and beyond by making the most of the opportunity to raise our profile and increase our fundraising income, together with setting out an inspirational vision for our future.

Our bookings for the year ahead are already close to capacity but we remain hugely cognisant of the financial challenges faced by the schools and community groups we serve. It is more important than ever to ensure that the experience we offer remains accessible to those who need it most.

We will do this alongside continuing to protect and enhance the natural environments on our farms and ensuring we lead by example with sustainable farming and operational practices.

There is no doubt that 2025-26 will bring both celebrations and challenges, but we remain committed to working energetically and collaboratively to ensure that more children and young people than ever before are able to take home the benefits of being farmers for a week.

**“Our knowledge as teachers has massively improved and we have been inspired to take this philosophy into our school. A phenomenal experience that excites and inspires children and adults.”**

 **Lead Teacher, Cwmffrwdocer Primary School, Torfaen**





# Your support makes this possible

As we move into our 50th year, we want to thank every funder, donor and champion that has supported the charity not just in this last year but over the last five decades!

Your support is essential to our mission, our impact and the children and young people we serve - we couldn't have done it without you.

## How you can continue to help

There are so many ways you can make a difference. Setting up a regular gift, leaving a gift in your will, taking on a challenge or supporting our work through your company or foundation will all help us make a positive impact on the lives of young people.



### Donate

Every gift enables our outdoor learning programme to happen each week.



### Partner

Collaborate with us to create lasting change.



### Share

Spread the word to amplify our impact.

## Make a donation or set up a regular gift today

### QR code:

Scan your phone's camera over this code:



### Online:

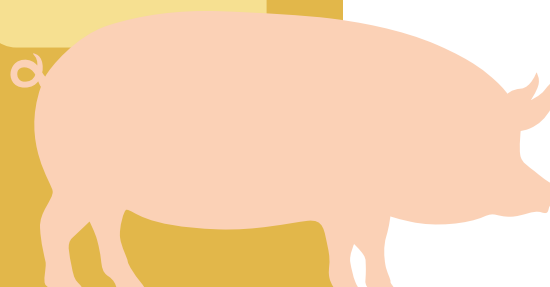
Visit [farmsforcitychildren.org/donate](https://farmsforcitychildren.org/donate)

### By post:

Send a cheque to:  
Farms for City Children, Huxham  
Barns, Huxham, Exeter, Devon,  
EX5 4EJ

**Bank transfer:** Call 01392 276678 or email [fundraising@farmsforcitychildren.org](mailto:fundraising@farmsforcitychildren.org) for details.

Together, we're making a difference. Let's keep it going for the next 50 years!







## Contact us



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