



Kingfisher Award Scheme 2018

Report for The Nineveh Trust



Overview

The aim of the Kingfisher Award Scheme project is to provide school children with the opportunity to get out of the classroom and go on to local farms to explore the natural environment and to touch, feel and see the relationship between wildlife and farming.

The project successfully took place as planned in three counties this year: Cornwall, Devon and Somerset. The summer activities make up the main part of the project's annual expenditure and consist of four main components in each county: field days, research project & presentation, family picnic & award ceremony, and staffing & support for schools.

Field Days

Almost 800 children from 22 schools took part in the field days in May or June, depending on the county. The field day activities in each county were based on a specific theme as follows:

- Cornwall: What lives on a dairy farm?
- Devon: Pollinator Explorers and Sheep Wranglers
- Somerset: What is in and below a meadow?

In order for the children to explore the different aspects of wildlife conservation on the farm they are visiting, they are divided into smaller groups and spend time at a number of different activity stations. For example, at the farm in Fraddon, Cornwall, there were activity stations to visit cows in a field (milk/grass/soil/manure), a woodland area (cycle of wood, food chain, mammals) and a pond and stream (dragonflies, amphibians, stream sampling techniques). The activity stations are run by the farmers and local volunteers, who have specialist knowledge on their particular topic.

'Both pupils and staff had an incredible time both on the trip and completing the subsequent project. It was good for the children to engage in the project, despite lots of the children living near the countryside, most have not been to a farm.'

Year 4 Teacher, Indian Queens School

Research Project & Presentation

When the children returned to their respective schools, they had approximately 6 weeks to work on putting together a presentation. It is impressed upon the teachers that the focus of the display must be child-led and that the presentation must fit on or around a table. The children used an imaginative range of different resources to produce their display including drawings, card games, board games, animal masks,

posters, live experiments, poems, stories and songs (sung proudly on the day to the judges!). Teachers commented positively on the style of learning opportunities provided, which engaged children well who sometimes had difficulty engaging in a classroom setting and inspired them to get involved in the presentation back at school.

'It has provided the stimuli to fantastic project work. The project has had a massive positive impact on pupils' enjoyment and engagement with their studies.'

Year 4 Teacher Mawgan-in-Pydar School

Family Picnic and Award Ceremony

The school children and their teachers are invited back to a celebratory picnic, along with their parents, friends and families. In Somerset the picnic was held at the farm itself, in Cornwall it was held at a local working men's club, and in Devon it was held at a village cricket club. Each event includes a range of activities to keep family members entertained whilst the judges are making their rounds, talking to the children who have put the displays together. Activities included apple bobbing, welly wanging, how to encourage wildlife in your garden, making willow wands, elderberry bead necklaces and buzzing bees.

Each school display presented a slightly different aspect of the field day and were of a very high standard. The creativity was evident as was the diverse learning that continued after the field day. The judges included a biology and ecology lecturer, farmers, local agricultural association officers, a local journalist and FWAG advisors.

'Very impressed with the whole event, the number of school children attending – the standard of their work and their enthusiasm. We are very committed to getting youngsters involved in understanding how farming, the food chain and the natural world all work together and this is just the sort of initiative that achieves this.'

Judge from Bridgwater Agricultural Association

Staffing and Support for Schools

The project would not be possible without the support, time, commitment, enthusiasm and knowledge from the army of volunteers who help make the Kingfisher Award Scheme (KAS) happen. The KAS coordinators in each county build excellent relationships with their local team of helpers, who fill a huge range of roles from activity station experts, picnic makers, guides and chaperones, judges and many more. Schools are fully supported throughout their involvement in the project to ensure the children and teachers are well prepared for their day in the field and their subsequent presentation on picnic day. The KAS coordinators are meticulous with their planning in order to ensure that events run smoothly and everyone enjoys these days safely.

'What a brilliant experience! Brilliant sessions by local experts really inspired the children to produce excellent work across many curriculum subjects. Very well organised and great communication. Also it was lovely to involve the parents when sharing their work.'

Year 4 Teacher, Norton Fitzwarren Church School

Photographs from the Kingfisher Award Scheme 2018



Learning about wheat



Making damper bread



Birds and nests



Worms and soil



Honey bees



Owls and owl pellets



Above selection: Judging of the projects from schools at the award picnics