

- 6 Our new headteacher has managed to improve the children's a great deal. **BEHAVE**
- 7 We can get together any time next week. Do you have any for which day? **PREFER**
- 8 I need your before I can spend any money on equipment. Could you sign here? **APPROVE**
- 5 You are going to read a newspaper article about schools running their own farms. For questions 1–5, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.
- Before he started work on the farm, Jake
 - was always late for school.
 - caused problems in his lessons.
 - knew very little about farming.
 - disliked having any responsibility.
 - What does Sam Connolly think is the farm's main achievement?
 - It has made teachers' lives easier in class.
 - It has improved the students' school attendance.
 - It has boosted the school's academic performance.
 - It has helped increase the range of subjects studied.
 - Mr Connolly's ambition is for the farm to help students
 - understand the whole process of food production.
 - get employment in the food industry.
 - appreciate the importance of the environment.
 - know more about the business side of agriculture.
 - Why are students encouraged to pick and eat vegetables?
 - to provide a healthier diet than they get at home
 - to teach them important new practical skills
 - to reinforce a key piece of knowledge
 - to demonstrate the poor quality of supermarket food
 - Professor Andrews thinks school farms
 - have changed children's eating habits.
 - can help schools save money.
 - should be part of the curriculum.
 - may have long-term health benefits.

School farms

More and more British schools are now running their own farms. There are now over 100, with another 100 more in the pipeline. One example is Hutton College in the north of England, which opened its farm in 2005. Here, students deal with all aspects of raising animals and growing vegetables. The working day starts at 7.30 am, two hours before lessons begin. Jake, 15, who used to hate waking up early for school, is now happy to do so. 'I love looking after the animals even if I have to get up early.' Jake also thinks the responsibility has made him a better student: 'I don't misbehave any more, and I find it easier to concentrate in class now.'

There are 1,200 pupils attending Hutton College. Sam Connolly, a science teacher, explains that although the school farm has helped improve the attitudes and behaviour of many of the students, overall it has also significantly improved results in subjects such as art, technology, maths and science. A number of school qualifications, including Agriculture Science and the Certificate in Animal Care, are now based on work done at the farm.

Mr Connolly emphasises that this is a real farm. It gives the school the opportunity to examine areas which are vital to today's food industry, including better awareness of where food comes from, animal welfare, the importance of a balanced diet and the need to reduce waste. Students are involved in growing fruit and vegetables which are on sale in the college's farm shop. 'If I can get children to realise how farming works in reality and what it all means, from the farm to the dinner plate, I'll be delighted,' he says.

All those concerned agree that the main thing with food is knowing where it comes from, so students are urged to pick and eat produce grown in the college gardens. Eating vegetables picked fresh from the gardens is something new for students often more familiar with supermarket ready-meals. Everyone comments on the way the lettuces stay fresh a lot longer than pre-packaged supermarket versions.

Mr Connolly says he is often amazed at some students' ignorance of farming. 'Even something as basic as growing a few peas and discovering how much effort you have to put in to get results can have a powerful impact on people,' he says. Professor Alex Andrews of Hutton University agrees. His research shows farms can improve students' self-confidence, educate them in the importance of eating well throughout their lives, and teach them about where their dinner originally comes from. As he says, 'All schools should be able to use farms to support their educational processes, even if this involves just looking after some chickens or growing vegetables for the school kitchens.'