

Hunters Hill School Farm

July 2017



In September 2016 the school re-established the school farm at Cropwood House Stables. Cropwood House was gifted to the City of Birmingham by the Cadbury family in the 1920's and became Cropwood House Open Air School, with its own farm. In the 1980's Cropwood School merged with its neighbour Hunters Hill Open Air School.

It is now a residential special school for Birmingham Local Authority children aged 11 to 16



with significant emotional, social, mental health, and behavioural issues. All have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. 9% are Looked After Children and 62% are entitled to Free School Meals. 81% receive the Pupil Premium. All the students have failed in mainstream education, including some who were school refusers before they started at Hunters Hill School. The school is in the top 20 percentile for deprivation in the country.

The students have been placed in a residential setting because their home life is so dysfunctional and chaotic, with drug and/or alcohol abuse common. Some are at risk of being drawn in to gang membership. The residential aspect of the school allows the children to develop in a stable, caring environment in a beautiful rural setting outside the city, near Bromsgrove. The school's specialism is improving the mental health and the emotional and social development of teenage children.

Hunters Hill School has re-established the school farm as a therapeutic resource for its pupils to use as part of their curricular and residential extracurricular activities. Work started in September 2016 with the appointment of a rural studies teacher and the reintroduction of pigs, poultry, sheep, miniature Shetland Ponies and bees, and plans are underway to restore the orchard and replant a vegetable garden.

Generous funding from Naturesave and other sources has enabled the school to purchase a large, agricultural, poly tunnel greenhouse that will enable the project to grow a wider range of fruit and vegetables, all of which will be either sold, to raise money for the farm, or used in the school kitchen and food technology lessons.