

Whirlow Hall Farm Trust (registered charity number 508910) is an educational charity based on a working farm on the outskirts of Sheffield. The Nineveh Charitable Trust has supported Whirlow regularly over the years, most recently with a £5,000 grant in August 2024.

At Whirlow Hall Farm, young people facing mental health challenges find the support and sense of belonging they need. We run a range of therapeutic and educational practical activities on the farm, designed around animal care, horticulture, countryside skills, cooking and craftwork. We welcome children from all over Sheffield and further afield however, our focus is on children and young people who experience complex and debilitating physical and mental health and learning disabilities.

Our alternative programmes are split into two categories:

Secondary Provision (Ages 11 – 18) working with schools across Sheffield to ensure children with complex needs such as Autism, ADHD, and trauma, and including school refusers, can access educational provision focused on progression and reengagement with education.

Post 18 Provision for young adults aged 18+ with moderate to severe Special Educational Needs (SEND). The programme provides opportunities for them to explore and develop essential skills for independent living as well as farm based vocational skills in animal care and horticulture.

Additionally, we offer **day and residential visits** for schools. The children take part in farm tours, curriculum-linked sessions, interactive storytelling, and seasonal farm jobs. These visits are designed to help children grow in confidence, gain independence and develop relationships with both peers and adults.

Sheffield has a high level of social and economic deprivation with a quarter in the 10% most deprived nationally. Twenty-nine percent of schools are located within disadvantaged areas based on Free School Meal uptake (the national average is 21%). We believe every young person should experience the countryside and receive some funding from the Countryside Stewardship programme to provide 14 free day visit experiences for up to 30 children each time, that includes a 2-hour farm tour and a self-led nature walk for a single class per day.



Has the project we helped to fund been completed? If so, how is it maintained?

Our financial year runs from August – July. As the most recent grant was awarded in August 2024, we have not yet finished this year. The education programmes are ongoing, but we report each year after July on the numbers we have supported as well as outcomes.

If not completed yet, why not? Are plans in place to finalise the project?

The education programmes are ongoing, but we work in line with the academic year. Some children move on at the end of July when the school year ends so we analyse our outcomes and impact based on our work between August and July of each year.

**Did the funds provided by us prove adequate, or was there an over- or under-spend?
How were any surplus funds used, or was further funding made available?**

The funds contributed to the shortfall of funds for the education programmes. We receive a fee for each individual to attend our programmes however this does not cover the full costs of the project. We have a number of funders who provide grants restricted to the education programmes. Any shortfall comes from our other income streams including other fundraising activities, and our commercial activities including the farm shop, cafe and catering external events.

Numbers supported

Year	Secondary	Post-16	Residential visits	Day visits
2021-22	91	25	730	0
2022-23	130	27	984	326
2023-24	141	29	930	345
Expected for 2024-25	175	30	1,000	370

Has the project been successful and well received by the beneficiaries?

Child X

Until starting at the farm, child X, aged 15, had barely been out of the house in five years. They started attending for half a day a week to build fitness. When X was first shown around the farm, they walked to the lambing barn (approximately 200 metres) with staff but was so unfit that staff needed to find a chair for X to sit on. Since attending Whirlow, X has gained fitness and a great deal of confidence. They have anger management issues that are being worked on, and it is becoming apparent X is very frightened about “mummy” (at 15, it’s uncommon for a child to still call a parent “mummy” rather than “mum”) dying and him having to move away from the area. X now attends two full days at Whirlow and three half days at a special school and will continue at the special school post 16 to continue the work

School feedback:

“Whirlow Hall Farm is fantastic for our children/young people to access. Over the course of our stay, we find friendship groups are formed. The handling of the animals really gives our children/young people the confidence, excitement and education information they thrive from. Jen is amazing with us all, she has a wealth of knowledge and interacts with all our SEND children and young people so well.

This is our second year of coming along, it has been just as wonderful. For Spectrum/Wasp it has been a really special time for our children. The cooking school with Hilary was amazing, the cheesecake went down a treat. The farmhouse makes working and learning together so lovely. Sharing chores and eating as a “family” really brought in special moments. Jen has worked so hard to make our activities extra special, even coming back to share our campfire. Thank you for everything.”

Are you satisfied with the outcome, or, with hindsight, would some modifications have been appropriate?

Although the outcomes for this year are not yet available, we expect to see similar outcomes to previous years. These include:

Eighty-five percent showing a reduction in anxieties within 12 weeks at Whirlow, increasing to 95% within six months for those who stay longer.

Successfully moving on which could be returning to their school and being more engaged, moving on to a new school, starting at a special school or gaining qualifications to move onto further education. At the end of July 2024, 83% progressed in a way that was suitable for them and their abilities.

Last year we introduced the AQA Unit Award Scheme; small units of work which allows all students to engage with learning and have their achievements formally recognised. By July 2024, 74% of our secondary students had achieved AQA Unit Awards; an average of 4.9 units each and total units achieved by the cohort was 84.

Was funding for this project made available from any other sources?

Yes, see above.

How did you find our own process of selection and payment?

Clear and straightforward, thank you.

Have you considered providing us with an update on the activities for which our Trust provided the funding?

We can provide a new impact report for the year 24-25 as soon as it is ready (August/September time). In the meantime, the Impact report for the year ending July 2024 is included.

Would you welcome a visit by our Trustees?

Absolutely.