

# Case Study



## The John Fielding Community Special School Basic Horse and Pony Care Course

### Paid for by the school and parental contributions

The John Fielding Community Special School provides a curriculum that is caring, aspirational, relevant and engaging. The school want everyone to be happy and eager to come to school, to do their best and also to develop skills to prepare them for life beyond school.

The School aims to provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum designed to meet the unique needs of all their pupils. Pupils are aged between 2 and 19 years old and have a range of learning difficulties, some also have an autistic spectrum disorder, epilepsy, a physical disability, sensory impairment, medical needs or a communication difficulty.

The school asked Inspired Equine Assisted Learning CIC to develop a teaching framework that would allow their pupils to learn about basic horse and pony care during a 6 week half term period. The framework was designed to be fully interactive and adaptable to the age and abilities of each individual class. The framework also includes the necessary degree of flexibility to allow for issues such as inclement weather or a certain activity taking longer than expected with a particular group.

The framework is shown below:

<b>Week</b>	<b>Theme/Activity</b>	<b>What pupils should gain from activity</b>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health &amp; Safety Information.</li><li>• Introduction to horse behaviour.</li><li>• Meet the ponies in a safe manner.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn how to follow health and safety rules when working with animals.</li><li>• Use personal protective equipment (riding hats, gloves, etc.) as directed.</li><li>• How to recognise horse behaviour from a safety point of view.</li><li>• How to approach horses safely and quietly, in order to touch and groom them.</li></ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grooming horse demonstration.</li><li>• Learn basic parts of the horse.</li><li>• Grooming horse practical.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn why we groom horses and how to do it safely.</li><li>• Use of various brushes and tools for grooming.</li><li>• Identify parts of the horse for grooming.</li><li>• Practice grooming the ponies to develop confidence, coordination, control of personal energy, movement and emotions in order to interact safely with ponies.</li></ul>

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading a horse demonstration.</li> <li>• Leading a horse practical.</li> <li>• Learn about the types of feed suitable for horses and ponies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn how to safely lead a horse/pony to develop coordination, spatial awareness, and control personal energy, movement and emotions in order to interact safely with ponies.</li> <li>• Learning to control self and pony also develops 'leadership' skills and self-confidence.</li> <li>• Learn to recognise types of feed suitable for an herbivore (opportunity to see/touch/smell different types of feed.)</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable Management.</li> <li>• Demonstration and practical experience of mucking out, feeding and watering horses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn what is involved in the essential daily care of the horses/ponies.</li> <li>• Pupils will gain experience of handling tools and equipment as directed.</li> <li>• Learn about the different types of bedding used in stables and gain practical experience of 'mucking out', enhancing movement, coordination, confidence and satisfaction of a job well done.</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field Management.</li> <li>• Safety and well-being of horses kept at grass.</li> <li>• Practical experience of clearing droppings from field</li> <li>• Awareness of horse behaviour at grass.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn why horses need access to open space to exercise and socialise and the impact of this on their well-being.</li> <li>• Pupils will gain experience of handling tools and equipment as directed, enhancing movement, coordination, confidence and satisfaction of a job well done.</li> <li>• Pupils observe natural equine behaviour and learn how to keep themselves safe.</li> <li>• N.B. All activities to be performed in a safe, controlled and supervised environment to ensure safety of pupils, staff and horses/ponies.</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils to design and build a small obstacle course in the indoor arena and to practise all their horse handling and personal skills learnt over the term.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of imagination to create an obstacle course suitable for small ponies.</li> <li>• Teamwork to build the course together.</li> <li>• Control of self and pony to successfully negotiate the obstacle course together, enhancing coordination, spatial awareness, confidence.</li> <li>• Observation, support and encouragement of other pupils whilst completing the course, enhancing teamwork.</li> </ul>

The sessions have proved incredibly popular with pupils and helped them to noticeably improve week on week in the following areas:

- Self-confidence and leadership.
- Coordination, balance and spatial awareness.
- Controlling emotions and energy.
- Improved behaviour and concentration.
- Enhanced use of speech and body language.
- Responsibility, teamwork and encouraging others.
- Demonstrating an understanding of the subject.

Parents are invited to attend the last session of the term. This enables them to join in with some of the activities and also witness what their child has accomplished during the term.

When they complete the course all pupils are awarded a certificate and rosette to acknowledge their hard work and achievements.

***“My class at the John fielding school have had a lovely 6 weeks here learning how to look after the horses and ponies. All staff (and animals) were very calm and patient with my pupils. Thank you for an enjoyable term xx”***

— Vicky Spillane, December 6, 2016