

Policy 11 Excellence in Education

The stunning estuary of Chichester Harbour is a place where people of all ages and abilities can develop an understanding and appreciation of one of England's most cherished landscapes. The Chichester Harbour Education Service will continue to work with visiting schools and colleges, thereby enabling children and young people to learn about the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The variety of habitats and its coastal location make Chichester Harbour an **ideal outdoor learning environment**. Since the opening of the Education Centre in 1999, the Conservancy has developed a sophisticated and well-structured formal education programme open to students of all ages, working in close co-operation with Hampshire and West Sussex schools as well as those from further afield. This programme covers the complete range of educational establishments from primary to adult, and includes special education as well as specialist interest groups.



Over 11,000 pupil sessions are run each year (one session is a single pupil visiting the Harbour for half-a-day). This figure includes field trips in several Harbour locations as well as afloat, using *Solar Heritage*. The Conservancy is committed to giving pupils and students the opportunity to explore the natural environment, learning and developing new skills from their Harbour experience. Beaky's Wildlife Area, which is near to the classroom at Dell Quay, provides a location for younger children to learn. It is also a suitable space for special educational needs groups to enjoy time outside in a safe environment.

The formal education programme continues to be developed in the context of the Management Plan and in relation to the demands of the National Curriculum. This results in curriculum-related activities designed to bring a better understanding of, and a sense of guardianship for, this protected landscape. Education provision works closely with local Environmental Education Groups. The established learning programmes focus on outdoor and first-hand experiences, including art and photography, coasts and rivers, citizenship (Junior Conservancy), history, investigating animals, plants and habitats, literacy and numeracy, and life skills.

The Chichester Harbour Education Service benefits from a team of expert and highly valued Education Volunteers, who support the service in all areas of its work. They are an essential part of the team, providing an 'extra pair of eyes' when supervising large groups of young people, during busy outdoor learning sessions.

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

- Comparatively few schools visit the Harbour during winter months even though there is much to see and do during this important time of the year.
- Visits to Chichester Harbour can be financially prohibitive for some educational establishments.
- There is scope for a greater volume of graduate and postgraduate research to take place at Chichester Harbour.

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS

- Chichester Harbour Conservancy
- Chichester Harbour Federation
- Chichester Harbour Trust
- Chichester Ship Canal Trust
- Friends of Chichester Harbour
- Colleges
- Institute of Outdoor Learning
- Primary Schools
- Secondary Schools
- South Downs National Park Authority
- Special Educational Needs Schools
- Universities
- Woodger Trust



- 11.5 To develop and maintain new relationships with schools within reasonable commutable distance that are not currently taking advantage of the educational opportunities of Chichester Harbour.
- 11.6 In partnership with the Friends of Chichester Harbour, to try and overcome any barriers to accessing the Education Service (e.g. transport, affordability, etc.).
- 11.7 To encourage more winter school visits, for example, to engage pupils with the range of overwintering birds only present at that time of year.
- 11.8 In partnership with the Friends of Chichester Harbour, to offer subsidised *Get Afloat!* trips on *Solar Heritage* to groups that would not otherwise be able to go out on the water.

Actions to be taken by Chichester Harbour Conservancy:

- 11.1 To deliver a curriculum-linked Chichester Harbour Education Service which provides staff and resources for visiting educational establishments.
- 11.2 To deploy Education Volunteers to help facilitate visiting educational establishments.
- 11.3 To deliver the Junior Conservancy programme, which enables children to understand real life issues in Chichester Harbour and then debate them in the Council's Chamber.
- 11.4 To deliver a local outreach programme called Harbour Schools.

Actions to be taken by other stakeholders:

- 11.9 To engage with different water user groups (dinghy, racing, cruising, and powerboat, etc.) raising awareness about good environmental practice (sailing clubs, Chichester Harbour Federation, etc.)
- 11.10 To provide education opportunities for special educational needs groups.