

Brymore

experience to last a lifetime

1952 - 2012



From Field to Fork *securing the future of food and farming*

HELP US TO CREATE TOMORROW'S SKILLED WORKFORCE

Agriculture // Forestry // Arboriculture // Countryside Management
Food Production // Gamekeeping // Horticulture // Fisheries Management
Animal Care // Equestrian // Veterinary Care // Landscape Design
Beekeeping // Agricultural Engineering // Conservation // Floristry
Sports Turf Management // Animal and Plant Husbandry
Environmental Studies // Farriery



Are you aware that, as of 2015 Land Based BTECs will no longer count in school league tables?

The knock on effect of this will be that schools like ours, who currently offer Land Based BTECs such as Agriculture and Horticulture will be forced to drop them from the curriculum, as it will jeopardise their results.

60,000 people are
required to enter the
land based industry
over the next 10 years
LANTRA

How can schools justify investment in school farms when these qualifications no longer count? The message is clear - Land Based studies in schools are not valued. Please help us to campaign for Land Based BTECs to be included in school performance tables. Your support could make all the difference.

While one in ten UK businesses are from the Land Based sector - that's 230,000 companies employing 1,000,000 people in Britain today, the proposed vocational curriculum for 2015 offers no Land Based qualification that will appear in school measures.

According to the Wolf Report, the Vocational Curriculum needs to be more aspirational, more rigorous than it has been in the past. So why is it that Hair and Beauty or Hospitality will feature among the recently accredited BTECs, while Agriculture and Horticulture will not?

Schools as unique as Brymore , who specialise in Land Based Studies are being forced to consider our options - or risk being labelled as 'unsuccessful'. What is more, schools with farms across the country will face similar tough choices.

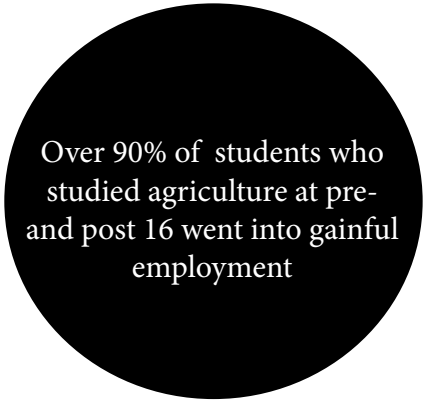
The reason for this decision? Is it because economically the country no longer requires a skilled workforce in the land based sector? Is it because other business sectors provide a greater market? Sadly, quite the reverse. 60% of food we eat is produced in the UK - that's £171 billion spent on food, drink and catering each year, making the food sector the largest part of the UK economy - at 14%. According to Dr Gordon McGlone, Chair of LANTRA

'Businesses in our sector make a significant contribution to resolving major issues such as climate change, fuel and energy security, and food security. To do this effectively, they require skilled and motivated workers. To function successfully in the new economic climate and remain economically active, these workers will require more skills, different skills and more flexible skills.'

So, why this exclusion of Land Based subjects from the school curriculum? Is it because the Land Based Sector is currently saturated with a young, overskilled workforce unable to find jobs? No, it is in fact an ageing workforce, with an older age profile than that found in any other major industrial sector. One in twelve (8%) of all workers are over 65, compared to 2% across the economy as a whole. The need to inspire young people to enter the Land Based Industry is greater than ever.

Yet, in spite of this, **the latest government changes to curriculum measures in schools signal the death knell for Land Based Studies in schools.** What is even more difficult to understand, is that the government's drive is to raise standards and improve the employability of young people, because many in industry complain about the standards and work ethic of school leavers today. I would argue that the values instilled in both agriculture, horticulture and other land based subjects, such as hard work, resilience, responsibility, a lack of instant results and a need for long term planning are precisely the skills employers want.

I am concerned simply because this will affect the students of Brymore. I am concerned simply because it will affect the economy as a whole. We cannot claim to promote equal opportunities and a fair incentive for all in schools - and then exclude one key sector from performance measures. We want to urge the government to recognise Land Based Studies among the accredited BTECs which count in school performance tables.



Over 90% of students who studied agriculture at pre- and post 16 went into gainful employment

What are the implications of the Secondary School Accountability Framework?

Why is consultation so important?

The Secondary School Accountability Consultation outlines within its vision that 'schools will improve most when teaching professionals have the autonomy to decide how best to teach pupils, alongside being properly held to account for their pupils' education and qualifications'. However, the proposed changes to the measures actually reduce autonomy for specialist schools such as Brymore to teach a curriculum which best suits the needs of our pupils. **Currently in the top 3% in the country on value added measures, we must be doing something right.** What is right is that we offer the 'broad curriculum' which promotes a 'deep understanding' and maximises 'progress and attainment' which the consultation document claims the changes to assessment and accountability are designed to promote.

At Brymore, boys have access to the best possible Maths and English teaching, with extra sessions, targeted support, specialist intervention and outstanding teaching - all of which has led to a sharp rise in achievement. This is exactly what the Wolf report would want to see. At the same time, boys study up to three sciences, including options to do Environment and Land Based Science, ICT and academically enriching subjects such as Art and History. So far, so good - according to the new measures. **But here is where the school fails. Our boys run a farm.** They are Heads of Department. They manage

the school site and tend the gardens, growing the vegetables which we serve in the canteen. They study engineering and technology in workshops which include a forge and a machine room. While Technology GCSE will count in the new measures (and our results in this area are outstanding), Agriculture and Horticulture will not. **The proposed measures for 2015 do not include any Land Based qualifications** among the 'high value qualifications which meet the government's predefined criteria.' Apparently, this has 'incentivised' schools to 'teach high value vocational qualifications'. For us the incentive is to remove Agriculture and Horticulture from the curriculum and replace them with French. Is this truly what is best for our students? Or is it merely a 'narrow' view of education, which promotes a 'one size fits all' philosophy that will not work. **The aim of the changes is to ensure that pupils study qualifications that will 'be most useful to them.'** I agree they should.

The new measures are designed to avoid 'perverse incentives for schools to enter pupils for poor quality but 'easier to pass' qualifications'. I agree - provided the correct 'poor quality' qualifications are removed. I dispute the notion that what we teach at Brymore, where boys get up at 6.30am to take on farm duties, calculate the yields, run the business, tend the animals, sell their own produce is 'poor quality'. Our parents would disagree, too.

I believe that vocational education should be rigorous. I believe that maximising English and Maths results should be the core business of every school. I believe that 'progress' is a fairer measure of a school's impact than how many achieve C grades or above. However, I cannot accept that every school measure should be based on eight subjects, of which two must be English and Maths, a further three from the e baccalaureate (to include a modern foreign language) and three more subjects, two of which could be high quality vocational qualifications but none of which can be Land Based. The new measures should highlight schools which 'have particularly good success rates in vocational subjects'. Yet the truly 'technical' schools like us, who have been delivering vocational excellence since 1952, will be penalised because our area of expertise happens to be in a sector that the government does not recognise.

For 60 years Brymore has been at the forefront of vocational excellence. Please help us to make a difference for the next 60 years.



Mark Thomas
Headteacher

If you support the inclusion of Land Based subjects in the 2015 measures, please do one of the following things:

- 1 Visit our website at www.brymoreschool.co.uk and go on our Facebook and Twitter to share with others
- 2 Complete the online petition (link on our website)
- 3 Complete the statutory consultation regarding League Table Reforms (link on our website)
- 4 Write to your MP, tell others, contact the media - do whatever you think will make a difference
- 5 Contact us if you can offer further support or wish to receive further copies of this leaflet for distribution.



Brymore School is a state boarding school for boys aged between 13 and 17, which means the education is free and we are open to day pupils. Academic success is achieved through small class sizes, a practical curriculum, outstanding facilities and an emphasis on traditional values.

We have the largest and longest established working school farms in the country with over 100 acres of land caring for a beef and dairy herd, rare breed pigs, poultry and sheep. Additionally we have extensive horticultural facilities including a one acre walled garden, glasshouses, poly tunnels and an apiary. Our boys get a real hands-on experience within both Agriculture and Horticulture as they are required to perform duties, ranging from milking the cows and helping with lambing to maintaining the beds and borders around the school grounds. In addition our links with Bridgwater College ensure boys have access to the state of the art facilities at the Cannington Centre.

We are continuing to build on our success and we are about to start the consultation process to take boys in Years 7 and 8 from 2014. We think the future is important. Please help us to create tomorrow's workforce today.

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