

Growing your skills at Linton Zoo

Developing your potential at the zoo



Proposal: Linton Zoo as an Experiential Learning & Outreach Centre

1. Vision and Rationale

Exploring Outreach Opportunities at Linton Zoo

Welcome to Linton Zoo:

We are thrilled to introduce you to the multifaceted outreach opportunities available at Linton Zoo, where education meets conservation. As dedicated teachers, you understand the importance of engaging students in real-world experiences, and Linton Zoo offers a unique platform for this endeavour.

Educational Programmes

Linton Zoo provides a variety of educational programmes tailored to different age groups and curriculum needs. These programmes are designed to foster a deeper understanding of biodiversity, conservation, and the environment:

- **Interactive Workshops:** Hands-on workshops allow students to learn about animal behaviour, habitats, and conservation efforts in an engaging manner.
- **Guided Tours:** Our knowledgeable guides offer insights into the lives of the zoo's inhabitants, emphasizing the importance of conservation and sustainable practices.
- **Conservation Talks:** These sessions focus on global and local conservation issues, inspiring students to become proactive environmental stewards.
- **Bespoke educational opportunities** allowing for teaching staff to highlight a key area of focus within various subjects, should this be required (speak with the education leader of Linton Zoo).

Benefits of Participating

Engaging with Linton Zoo's outreach programmes bring numerous benefits to both teachers and students:

- **Real-World Learning:** Students can connect theoretical concepts with real-world applications, enhancing their understanding and retention.
- **Inspiration and Motivation:** Seeing animals up close and learning about conservation efforts can inspire students to pursue careers in science and environmental studies.
- **Skill Development:** Activities foster critical thinking, teamwork, and communication skills.

Getting Involved

We invite you to explore the following ways to get involved:

- **Field Trips:** Plan a visit to the zoo for an immersive experience. Customizable programs can be tailored to fit your educational goals.
- **Zoo Outreach at School:** If visiting the zoo is not feasible, Linton Zoo offers outreach programs where our team visits your school with engaging and informative presentations.
- **Teacher Resources:** Access a variety of materials and lesson plans aligned with national standards to supplement your curriculum.

How to Plan Your Visit

Organising a visit or an outreach session is straightforward:

1. **Contact Us:** Reach out via our website or phone to discuss your interests and requirements.
2. **Customise Your Experience:** Work with our education team to tailor the programme to your needs.
3. **Schedule Your Visit:** Confirm your booking and enjoy a seamless experience with your students.

Join the Conservation Effort

By participating in Linton Zoo's outreach opportunities, you're not only enhancing your students' education but also contributing to vital conservation efforts. Together, we can inspire the next generation to cherish and protect our planet's incredible biodiversity.

We look forward to welcoming you and your students to an unforgettable educational adventure at Linton Zoo!

Working in Partnership:

This proposal outlines a partnership between the school and Linton Zoo Conservation Park to create an innovative outdoor learning hub that supports pupils in reaching their full potential through experiential, interdisciplinary education.

Linton Zoo provides an ideal setting due to its:

- Strong **focus on conservation and education**
- Access to **rare and endangered species within breeding programmes**
- Existing **educational activities, keeper talks and hands-on animal encounters**

This aligns with research showing that zoo-based education **improves conservation understanding and encourages positive environmental behaviours among pupils.**

2. Aims and Objectives

Core Aim

To utilise Linton Zoo as a **living classroom** that enhances academic achievement, personal development, and environmental awareness.

Objectives

- Promote **deep learning through real-world contexts**
- Support **cross-curricular teaching**
- Develop **independent thinking, creativity, and problem-solving**
- Foster **empathy, responsibility, and environmental stewardship**
- Engage pupils who may be **less responsive to traditional classroom learning**

3. Curriculum Integration

A. Biological Sciences (Core Science)

Learning Opportunities:

- Animal behaviour observation studies
- Adaptation and evolution investigations
- Food chains and ecosystems
- Conservation and endangered species research

Activities:

- Field journals documenting animal behaviours
- Data collection on feeding habits and habitats
- Workshops linked to keeper talks and enrichment activities

Impact: Students gain a **direct understanding of biodiversity and conservation** through authentic observation.

B. Design and Technology (D&T)

Learning Opportunities:

- Designing and creating **animal enrichment devices**
- Materials testing for durability and safety
- Sustainable design principles

Activities:

- Pupils design enrichment toys (e.g. feeders, puzzles)
- Prototype development and testing within the zoo environment
- Collaboration with zoo staff on animal welfare needs

Impact: Encourages **innovation, engineering thinking, and iterative design**, while directly benefiting animal wellbeing.

C. Geography

Learning Opportunities:

- Global ecosystems and climate zones
- Human impact on habitats
- Sustainability and conservation strategies

Activities:

- Habitat mapping of zoo enclosures
- Comparing zoo habitats with natural biomes
- Climate change impact case studies

Impact: Develops **global awareness and spatial understanding** of environmental issues.

D. Animal Enrichment & Welfare (Cross-disciplinary)

A unique strength of this partnership is student involvement in **animal enrichment programmes**, which:

- Encourage **ethical thinking and empathy**
- link science, design, and behaviour studies
- provide **real-world impact on animal wellbeing**

Example:

- Designing enrichment for primates or carnivores
- Observing behavioural changes after enrichment implementation

This mirrors Linton Zoo's educational approach, where visitors can **learn directly through feeding sessions and enrichment activities led by keepers**. [lintonzoo.com]

4. Delivery Model

A. Structured Programme

Phase	Activity
Pre-visit	Classroom preparation (research, design briefs)
On-site learning	Workshops, data collection, enrichment trials
Post-visit	Evaluation, presentations, reflection

B. Timetable Options

- Weekly or termly enrichment projects
- Half-term thematic programmes
- Intensive project weeks
- GCSE/A-level fieldwork modules

5. Inclusion and Student Development

This model supports:

- **SEN learners** through hands-on, sensory learning
- **Disengaged students** by offering alternative learning pathways
- Development of:
 - Communication skills
 - Teamwork
 - Leadership

Zoo education programmes are widely recognised for **engaging diverse learners and providing lifelong learning experiences**.

6. Assessment and Outcomes

Assessment Methods

- Project portfolios
- Fieldwork reports
- Presentations
- Practical design outcomes

Expected Outcomes

- Improved attainment in Science, D&T, and Geography
- Increased environmental awareness
- Enhanced engagement and motivation
- Development of transferable skills (critical thinking, collaboration)

7. Operational Considerations

Logistics

- Travel from school to Linton Zoo (local advantage)
- Risk assessments and safeguarding protocols
- Supervision ratios with zoo education staff

Partnership Structure

- Named school-zoo coordinator
- Scheduled termly planning meetings

- Co-developed curriculum resources

8. Wider Opportunities

- Work experience and volunteering pathways
- Careers education in:
 - Zoology, Veterinary sciences and Conservation
 - Community engagement projects
 - Parent and community learning days
 - Key skills development

9. Long-Term Vision

This initiative could evolve into:

- A **Centre of Excellence for Outdoor Learning**
- A **regional model for school-zoo partnerships**
- A contribution towards **sustainability and conservation education goals**

10. Conclusion

Utilising Linton Zoo as an outreach and learning centre offers a **powerful, innovative educational model** that:

Connects classroom learning to real-world application

- Linton Zoo is an immersive classroom
- Inspires curiosity and responsibility for the natural world
- Helps pupils achieve their **full academic and personal potential**

