

## Horse Riding



Greenbank takes small groups of children once a week to a local riding school in Weir. This is a 4 week block where they learn basic horse care skills and how to ride.

### Mucking out

The children use various stable tools to clean out the stable - this requires a lot of hand-eye co-ordination and is definitely the smelliest job!

During this time they also fill up the water buckets and hay nets for the horses.



## Other skills

Along with the mucking out and grooming, the children have also learnt about parts of the horse and different colours, about rugs and tacking up (putting the saddle and bridle on), types of feed and how to plait the mane and tail.



## Grooming:

Grooming enables the children to work around all parts of the horse, brushing, cleaning and picking the feet out. The children love doing this and it helps create a bond between the child and horse. It has taken a real calming effect on the children so far.



## Riding:

During their time at Weir Riding Centre, the children have learnt how to ride. They now know how to ask a horse to walk, halt (stop), turn, trot and they even learnt rising trot - which is really tricky! Our children were lucky enough to take the horses out on a hack around a local bridle path. Here the children were able to experience riding out of the paddock and learn how to position themselves whilst walking up and down hill on a horse.



All in all, Kaye and Jenny (the instructor's) are very impressed with the children's riding skills, saying that they progressed extremely quickly for their age - WELL DONE GREENBANK!



## Benefits

1. **Learn Responsibility:** The best way to bring out responsibility is to make sure the children take care of all the work involved in caring for the horse. These include; feeding, grooming, cleaning, and tacking up and riding. A deeper bond between the child and horse is created from the effort put in from them taking care of it. Once the child learns that the horse needs them to take care of it so it can survive, and they cannot ride without doing this, they quickly learn that the work pays off.
2. **Learn Trust:** Horse's don't work well with people they cannot trust. Likewise, the children must trust their horse if they plan on having an enjoyable ride. If the child doesn't have that trust in the horse, the horse won't trust them.
3. **Learn to be open minded:** Once you have dealt with a horse, it is clear that all horse's act differently. Therefore, the child will continually learn from their horse, which may carry on into other areas in life.
4. **Build Confidence and Self Esteem:** It is understood that horses can look big and intimidating to any child. Once a child has had the opportunity to handle a horse on their own they will receive a huge boost in confidence. This may allow them to build confidence in other areas of their life such as relationships with other children in and out of school. This may be a huge boost for a child's self-esteem.
5. **Learn to be patient:** Horses don't always do what you tell them straight away. If the child has to deal with a tricky horse, they may develop patience and learn to apply this to other things as well. Perseverance is the key!
6. **Self-Discipline:** Horse's aren't the easiest animals to look after. Children may lack dedication and decide to give up as soon as something gets difficult. Looking after a horse is so rewarding that it provides great enjoyment for children. A horse needs care whatever the weather or time of year, this requires great discipline, a skill that may be transferred later in a child's life.

**7. Teaches Sensitivity:** Horses can become easily disturbed if they handled in the correct way. Being around a horse will teach a child that they can't just assume that a horse knows what they want them to do. A handler has to learn skills like; speaking reassuringly to a horse and trying to understand its behaviour. They should also try to understand why a horse may be reacting in such a way - whether it be out of fear or anger.

**8. How to Learn from mistakes:** It is extremely hard to perform tasks perfectly every time. A horse requires understanding as to why it may behave in such a way. A child will start to learn how to carry out a task slightly better next time by learning from past mistakes.

**9. Learn Respect:** If not dealt with in the correct way, a horse can cause minor problems. Being around a horse will quickly teach a child that they cannot disrespect it without consequences. After learning this skill, a child will learn to respect other things as well.

**10. To have fun:** The most important rule! If a child isn't enjoying being around a horse, it is unlikely that they will want to take care of the jobs required, which may lead to disinterest. That's why staff at Greenbank and Paul (the instructor) at Dam Top make sure our children have an enjoyable time during their session.

(Adapted from 'Horse Adventures', 14.11.14)

<http://www.horse-adventures.com/children/benefits.html>

Horse riding is a new adventurous activity for Greenbank that is proving very successful and beneficial for the children who have taken part.

Feel free to take a look at Weir Riding Centre's website for further information:

<http://www.weirridingcentre.com/>