



## River Wear Education and Engagement Project

### Mayfly in the Classroom

**Project duration:** May – October 2014

**Project lead:** Wear Rivers Trust

**Funders:** Wild Trout Trust (with funding for the wider education project from Northumbrian Water Limited and Sir James Knott Trust)

#### Project Aims

- To use MiC as an effective educational tool in schools in North East England to engage teachers and school children in aspects of aquatic ecology and sensitive catchment management.
- To deliver effectively MiC in 4 schools and to approximately 100 school children in the 2014 calendar year.

#### Project Delivery

The table below summarises the project delivery.

School	Participants	Project Date
Broadway Junior School, Sunderland	32 year three children and 8 adults	May 2014
Nettlesworth Primary School, nr Durham	26 year two/three children and 3 adults	June 2014
Easington C of E Primary School, Easington	31 year six children and 3 adults	June 2014
All Saints RC Primary School, Lanchester	18 year six children and 5 adults	June 2014
Howden-le-Wear Primary School, nr Crook	20 year one/two children and 5 adults	September 2014
St Andrew's Primary School. Bishop Auckland	18 year six children and 4 adults	September 2014
Wearhead Primary School, Weardale	19 infant and junior children and 4 adults	September/October 2014
	Total children: 164	

The feedback from all schools was that they had really enjoyed the project, that it had been well prepared and led, that the children benefitted from learning lots of new things and that they would like to do MiC again. Field trips were greatly enjoyed and teachers reported that the children were very good at doing their daily checks and particularly keeping an eye on water temperature. Teachers really valued having an 'expert' come in to lead on the project as they felt this made it more exciting for the children and it gave them the opportunity to learn about the work of a local environmental charity.

On the first WRT school visit they were given a presentation to introduce them to the mayfly topic and then completed a word search to help familiarise them with key vocabulary. Then equipment was explained and set up in groups before going on the field visit. Mayflies were then placed in their new homes after the trip and the children completed their first daily check before the end of the school day. Almost every school had live adults to release on the second field trip, although a couple of adults died in the fridge. Most schools made displays during the project to explain all the different aspects e.g. what they had done on the field trip, what the classroom set-up was, mayfly life cycle etc. All children drew mayfly pictures for WRT to take away and we are hoping to put a selection of these on our website. Each school was left with a set of mayfly quiz questions to be researched during the project and most classes were quizzed before setting off on the release trip. The project clearly got children thinking about the importance of all creatures in the food chain and they understood that mayflies and other invertebrates were vital for healthy rivers. The negative impact of pollution was also discussed.

### **Broadway Junior School**

This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> year that Broadway participated in MiC. Having no suitable local river from which to collect mayfly nymphs, the children travelled by minibus to Cong Burn Woods on the edge of Chester-le-Street. They really enjoyed the field work, wanting to bring all the creatures back to school, and were successful in having three adult flies to release.





### **Nettlesworth Primary School**

From school the children were able to walk to a local burn to carry out their kick samples. They only had one adult fly emerge as they had difficulty keeping the water temperature low. The weather was very hot during their project. On the second field trip to release their mayfly, we also took some stream measurements as an extra activity.

### **Easington C of E Primary School**

The Easington class had a particularly enthusiastic teacher who was very pleased with the opportunity for getting the children out doors. The local coastal streams are ephemeral and do not support healthy mayfly populations so field visits were made by coach to Old Durham Beck, on the outskirts of Durham city. Packed lunches were taken so the children could have lunch after collecting their mayflies. The release trip was extended into a longer field trip which included following the Beck to its confluence with the River Wear and learning about river features and some river history.

### **All Saints RC Primary School**

Field visits were carried out on the local river and again river processes were investigated on the release trip to supplement the ecological side.

### **Howden-le-Wear Primary School**

The youngest class this year did really well with the project activities. The local burn was used for the field visit but no mature mayfly nymphs were found so WRT collected some from the nearby River Wear instead during the school lunchtime. The children did find other riverflies and quite a few fish while kick sampling so they weren't disappointed. One adult emerged and, as the children were also studying Roald Dahl, they named it Charlie Chocolate Mayfly.

# Mayfly Picture

Name: Fearn C	School: Hawden
River: Beach Burn	Date: 16.09.14



## St Andrew's Primary School

The River Gaunless flows right past the school grounds so the class followed to an easily accessible point to do their kick sampling. They were very excited to catch fish as well as invertebrates. Again they only had

one adult emerge but they enjoyed the project so much that the teacher has decided the school will take part in WRT's Riverfly for Schools project, where a small group goes out each month to take an official riverfly sample.





### **Wearhead Primary School**

The project started with an assembly for both the infant and junior class and then the junior class participated in the rest of the project. The local burns were used for field work and they caught plenty of trout. The teacher was really enthusiastic and during the project they did creative writing (diaries from the

point of view of a mayfly) and studied mayfly poems. On the second WRT visit they read out extracts of their written work in a recital and were planning to type the diaries up to practise their computer skills.







# Mayfly Picture

Name: Isabel

School: Warkop

River: wear

Date: 3.10.2014

