

## Rivers in the Classroom

The Heritage Lottery grant, together with additional funding from United Utilities, allowed Ribble Rivers Trust to expand upon its existing *Trout in the Classroom* scheme and deliver an educational programme that could be better embedded within the National Curriculum.

Nine primary schools representing the different socio-economic and ethnic communities of Burnley took part in the project over two years, enabling around 500 children and their teachers to learn more about their local rivers.

Teacher training events were held each year prior to the tanks and trout eggs being installed at the school. During these sessions, the Trust learned that teachers were particularly keen to improve pupils' literacy and that *Rivers in the Classroom* could be a fun and engaging way to achieve this.

The children were able to observe first hand as the eggs hatched and the fry developed, while at the same time they learned about trout lifecycles and the wider river environment through a variety of different means, including science, creative writing, art and music.

When the fry were due for release, the pupils were taken to their local river for a celebratory send-off. This was coupled with a kick-sampling demonstration to show the children the array of invertebrate life found beneath the water's surface.

Following the release of the trout, some schools retained their tanks and allowed the Trust to trial *Mayfly in the Classroom* for the first time, which was deemed a success.

*Rivers in the Classroom* was evaluated using teachers' responses to questionnaires. Overall, the results showed that the children's knowledge about rivers improved from 'poor' to 'good' or 'very good' over the course of the project. One teacher commented;

*"The children were given experiences and learning opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom which enriched and enhanced their understanding of the local area. They were given an insight into environmental issues through first-hand experience."*

A short film of *Rivers in the Classroom* was produced and is available to view on YouTube: <http://youtu.be/vvCdOZpJvTw>

