



Straumøy Gard 5554 Valevåg, Norway

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Straumøy Gard

5554 Valevåg, Norway

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www.straumoygard.no

The farm:

- Meat from cattles, sheep, pigs and goats, two horses.
- pupils' garden
- Three dogs – Border collies looking after the sheep.
- Some hens.
- Two rabbits

The school:

- Pupils from 9 different schools in Sveio and Haugesund 3 days a week.

The couple, Anne og Leif Grutle are the owners of the farm. Leif is the farmer, Anne is the teacher. Leif takes care of the animals and the farming, Anne organizes and makes plans for the school-part on the farm. They are both taking care of the pupils when they are staying at the farm.

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- **The school:** 2008-09
- Every week there are 22 pupils here. 2 of them are staying here two days a week, 20 of them one day a week during the whole school-year.
- There are pupils here three days a week in groups of 7 to 11 pupils. We are 4 to 7 school- assistants or teachers helping them.

In Norway all pupils belong to ordinary schools, those who are mental handicapped too.

There are different reasons why they have a schoolday or two every week here on the farm.

- They are mental handicapped
- ADHD – hyperactive children
- Very lonely, unhappy or reserved children
- Lack of self – confidence
- Struggle with schoolsubjects like Norwegian, Mathematics ..

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- What are the pupils doing on the farm?

The first they do when they arrive in the morning, is to take part in feeding the animals.

Then we have lunch.

The second part of the day there are different activities:

- Take care of the animals
- Keep things in good repair
- Woodcutting
- Work in the garden (spring and autumn)
- Lumbering in the forest, clear away branches and junipers.
- We are at sea, fishing with nets. We visit our goats on Midtvik island (summer) or on Nappeid.
- We make tar from resinous pinewood, we make coal from deciduous trees, torches from a flower we call *kongslys* – the light of a king, *Verbascum* – we make thread from the *Linum* plant, we make teas and spices from several herbs, we make soap, soups and cakes over open fire.

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- What do they learn here at the farm?
- They get practical experiences which can help them understanding more theoretical subjects.
- They learn to
 - keep on with activities/ jobs. Not give in
 - take responsibility
 - take care of animals
 - cooperate with adults and other pupils
 - take consequences of what they are doing
 - strengthen their self- confidence
 - see the connection between gras and milk, milk and cheese, trees and materials, soil and vegetables...

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- In what way are they learning on the farm?
- The farmer and the other adults are all taking part in the work.
- The adults are models for the pupils, and in this way, the pupils learn how to work.
- The dialogue. We all talk about what we are doing, and try to connect the activities to more theoretic subjects as: what are the name of different trees, what is happening when the sheep give birth to the lamb...
- The silent knowledge: How you teach a person a practical subject without saying anything. "The knowledge of the hand". The pupils learn it from the master looking at what he is doing, taking part in the work, and after a while he will be able to take over the work.

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- What do the schools get from us?
- The school and the pupils get a schedule in the end of the day. There is a description of what they are going to do the next day they are staying here.
- We make a plan for half the year that says something about what we are going to do in that period.
- When the school-day is over, we send pictures and a report that says something about what the pupils have done that particular day. Many pupils make books out of these pictures and reports.

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- Why do we do this?
- We like people
- The farm is an alternative arena to the ordinary school.
- It is a way of keeping on with the farming.
- It is more important than ever to educate children on the long process it takes developing food "from earth to table". In the wake of the globalisation process we have developed a distance to the daily food we consume.
- On the farm, children can experience cyclical time, things that repeat themselves year after year, day after day. That gives a certain peace of mind, a sense of confidence in what is to come. The relation between effort and result is so strikingly clear. If one has not prepared a field the year before one sows, the result will be accordingly. To be ignorant has its price. That is an important lesson for the children.



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