

## News Release

17 September 2010

### Cumbrian Primary Schoolchildren Learn from Horseplay



Primary school pupils in Bothel near Carlisle are taking part in a pilot scheme for an innovative programme developed by a local woman to help develop children's emotional understanding through interaction with horses.

Psychotherapist Paula Mallinson-Roberts of Armathwaite near Carlisle, and her colleague Coral Harrison have been developing the equine-assisted learning programme over the last five years. It involves activities in which horses are used as a tool for emotional growth and learning, teaching children how to approach relationships and difficulties in everyday life. With its focus on emotional literacy and relationships, the process is directly linked to the Personal, social and health education (PSHE)/Citizenship section of the National Curriculum.

Five pupils at St Michaels C of E Primary School in Bothel will take part in the scheme over the next three weeks. The eleven year olds will be visited by Paula and her horses, Gypsy and Blue, on 10<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> September.

“Equine assisted learning is an emerging field and we have spent many years developing this programme which we believe is the only one of its kind in the North West,” explains Paula. “Having had significant success working with young people in the ‘looked after’ care system, we felt the benefits of working with horses could be extended to children in mainstream primary schools.

“The National Curriculum recognises the importance of helping children to deal with their emotions and form relationships from a very young age and these pilots will demonstrate a unique, fun and exciting way of learning with the help of our four legged friends.”

Paula runs a therapeutic centre for young people, children and families called Halona which provides a range of therapies including equine assisted psychotherapy. They have been operating for about five years.

The equine learning scheme is available to schools throughout Cumbria, if you would like to find out more, please contact Paula on **0773 6564246**, email [paula@paulamally.co.uk](mailto:paula@paulamally.co.uk) or visit [www.halona.co.uk](http://www.halona.co.uk).

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#### **Photography:**

Halona 001: (Left to Right) Tanya Graham and Jack Dinsdale of St Michaels C of E Primary School taking part in the equine-assisted learning programme today, with horse Blue.

#### **Editor’s Notes**

Paula and her colleague have worked with over 50 young people and a number of families with some real success:

“Working with my daughter in this way helped me realise what I was doing as a parent that has led to her displaying difficult behaviours. We are now closer and have a healthier relationship.”

*Mary and Cathy, aged 14 and 36, North Yorkshire*

“Amy is doing much better at school and is now telling the teachers and us when she is being bullied.”

*Amy, aged 9, Lancaster*