

Case Study

EDUCATION

**Charlton Manor
Primary School**



Space number: 6
Lead organisation: Charlton Manor Primary School
Borough: Greenwich
Postcode: SE7 7EF
Size: 224 sqm
Target group: School children, parents, teachers, local community
Land type: School land
Land owner: Local authority
Cost: Initial Grant £980
– plus further £4,000



Background

Charlton Manor is a primary school in Greenwich and was one of the first to sign up to Capital Growth. They transformed a disused area of the school grounds into a fantastic garden, with a wildlife and food growing area. Many pupils do not have gardens of their own, so this gives them a unique opportunity to learn about soil preparation, seed sowing, maintenance and harvesting and to understand where food comes from. Their intention is to get parents and the local community involved too.



How was the growing space created?

- The project started with the transformation of a disused area of the school grounds into two gardens.
- Pupils have been at the heart of the garden since its inception, playing a key role in the design process as well as its ongoing care and maintenance.
- They received a grant of £980 from Capital Growth which paid for materials, construction of food growing beds, fruit bushes, trees, seeds and equipment.
- The school budget along with other grants and donations were used to fund different aspects of the garden.
- Taster sessions give pupils and their parents an opportunity to taste the food they have grown and the school kitchen makes good use of crops, with pumpkin pie being a favourite among the children.
- The garden is now used throughout the school to enrich teaching and learning. For example, Year Four pupils harvested carrots from the garden and made biscuits using an authentic World War Two recipe, which supported the maths and history curriculum.



What has been achieved so far?

The school has enjoyed bumper crops of fruit and vegetables including grapes, butternut squash, raspberries and potatoes to name just a few. The pupils have become green entrepreneurs through the school's regular produce sales. Working with Lloyds Bank business advisors, pupils have developed a business plan for their new green business, which has involved learning about profit, loss and competitors as well as developing a brand identity and marketing their produce. Parents and local people now have a source of fruit and veg which is sold from the "Sweet Pickings" shop in the playground. All funds raised are reinvested into the garden which helps ensure the financial sustainability of the project.

There has also been lots of excitement about the installation of an observation bee hive. Working with Ruxley Beekeeping club this has given pupils a great opportunity to learn about bees and the vital role that they play in pollination. The hive is designed with a glass front and allows the children see the bees at work inside the hive. Pupils regularly don child size bee suits and help undertake weekly checks. Last year pupils harvested their first crop of honey using the school kitchen facilities. They got a good crop - extracting and bottling over 75 jars which sold out at the first sale.

The school's gardening achievements and green credentials have been widely recognised by a range of different organisations and awards, including being a runner-up in the Observer Ethical Awards 2010.

Top tips and lessons learnt



Investing time, effort and money to achieve good fertile soil makes a real difference come harvest time. Their raised beds have been a great success allowing them to grow a wider variety of fruit and veg at higher densities.

If you are school, choose early and late varieties otherwise children miss out on all the fun as crops will be ready to harvest during the summer holidays.

What were the main challenges, and how have they been overcome?

There has been a lot to consider in keeping bees, particularly in a school environment. Working closely with Ruxley Bee Keeping Club has helped enormously as they designed, built and advised on the siting of the observation hive. They also advised the school on equipment and maintenance, helping to ensure that the experience is a safe and happy one for pupils and bees alike.





How has Capital Growth supported the project?

The project benefited from a £980 grant to help with start up costs for the project. In addition they were one of 50 winners of the Capital Bee competition, which is supporting new community apiaries in London and were showcased at the Capital Bee Summit due to their innovative work with the observation hive.

What next?

The school is currently looking forward to the arrival of some feathered friends – chickens. At the moment pupils are studiously looking after eggs in an incubator and looking forward to seeing them hatch shortly. The chicks will be raised at the school and hopefully provide a source of fresh free range eggs.

Pupils are also looking to further develop their own eco-business, providing a source of low-cost locally grown food. They want to mount a campaign to make local people aware of the economic and environmental costs of their food choices. They are also thinking about diversifying by selling their honey on the internet.

What is Capital Growth?

Capital Growth is a partnership initiative between London Food Link, the Mayor of London Boris Johnson, and the Big Lottery's Local Food Fund. It is championed by the Chair of the London Food Board Rosie Boycott and aims to create 2012 new community food growing spaces across London by the end of 2012.

Capital Growth offers practical help, grants, training and support to groups in London wanting to establish community food-growing projects as well as advice to landowners.

This is part of a series of Capital Growth case studies.

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