

Orleans Infant School

GROWING IDEAS



Commitment level:



Equipment List

- Shed
- Trowels & forks
- Spade
- 7 watering cans
- Compost heap
- Poly tunnel fleece
- Small plastic greenhouse
- Organic slug pellets



PROJECTS

The Grounds: ex-parent and professional gardener, Jo Lavender, was invited by the school to tender for the Grounds Maintenance work and was awarded the contract. She also made the Bug Garden and the allotment.

Feature Gardens: including a bug trail, willow walk, musical instruments, games and recycled instruments.

Year 2 Allotment: run by Jo Lavender, the allotment was designed with narrow beds, so the children can reach into them. The allotment is tended by Year 2 children every Tuesday afternoon from February to December.

In the first term, students get to grips with the jobs a gardener does and become familiar with the plot they have inherited by identifying and tasting produce. They gain an understanding of growing seasons.

The autumn is used for preparing the soil with compost, and the students investigate the pests in the garden, and have become very effective at pest control. A parent comes in each year to run a workshop on compost.

Year 1 children are introduced to the allotment when they are invited to make signs that identify all the produce.

Each summer term Year 2 has a picnic to eat their produce.

Nursery garden features pots planted up with potatoes and onions that are

easy for nursery children to handle. The children describe it as 'digging for gold'.

Gardening Club: run by parents, the club meets weekly with activities such as planting bulbs, building a wormery, and making bird feeders.

Project Timeline

2001

Bug Garden built, and ex-parent landscaper wins contract to tend the grounds

2004

School gardener builds allotment. Tended by Year 2 from February-December

2006



September: Awarded Silver Garden Guardian

2009


Future revival of the Bug Garden, painting the shed and craft work with students

Grand Grounds Day for all in March





Commitment

 School gardener manages the grounds maintenance (in and out of term time), and also leads the weekly Year 2 Tuesday afternoon allotment sessions (1.15-3.15pm).

The three Year 2 classes rotate every third week. Each class has 30 children, and they can work on the allotment in groups of six, or eight if there are parent helpers.

Gardening Club on hold but soon to be resurrected by parent helpers.

Sharing best practice



Schools frequently come to look around the grounds, and take elements to implement in their own ground.

The children often lead their parents off to see their work on the allotment, and many parents have been inspired to start growing at home.


National Curriculum



A class working on a project about Mexico and was able to link the topic into the school garden by growing chillies.

Jo Lavender is working with Year 2 teachers to find out how an investigation into worms (decomposition, soil structure, nutrients) could tie into the national curriculum.

Funding

 The grounds have been funded largely by PTA donations, however the allotment was funded by the school's budget, as growing food is a focus of Year 2's curriculum time.

Disappointments

The narrow paths and small plot only allows six students to work on the allotment at one time.



When Year 2 leaves, they don't always get to see all the produce they tended.

Eating and cooking



The allotment produce is eaten whilst gardening, onions are passed around like apples, though the children had to be stopped from doing the same with the garlic!

Year 2 have a picnic towards the end of the summer term, when most of the produce is eaten raw. The courgettes, cabbage, potatoes, corn, broad beans and runner beans are cooked by Jo Lavender at home and brought into school for the picnic.

Children are challenged to eat the rather peppery nasturtiums.

What we grow



- Strawberries
- Blueberries
- Onions
- Herbs
- Potatoes
- Cucumber
- Carrots
- Tomatoes
- Chillies
- Garlic
- Cabbage
- Radishes
- Leeks
- Chard
- Lettuce
- Corn
- Carrots
- Mange tout & peas
- Nasturtiums
- Fennel
- Courgettes

