



Case study

Portway Junior School

Schools' Challenge – Grow it, Cook it, Eat it

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EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY

Background

Portway Junior School has 348 pupils aged 7-11 years. The school consists of 12 classes of Years 3 to 6. Portway is a three-form entry junior school in Andover, Hampshire, and is a mixed school of non-denominational religion.

The project

1. What were you trying to achieve for your learners through the curriculum

- To develop pupils' learning and understanding about food and farming
- To help pupils understand where their food comes from by providing them with direct experience of growing, cooking and farm visits

2. How did you organise the learning to achieve your aims for learners?

During the Year of Food and Farming the school used their refurbished garden, developing work from previously successful projects such as the Healthy Schools Award, the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award, Every Child Matters and Learning Outside the Classroom, to develop learning about food and farming in the following key areas:



- Soil preparation
- Seed growing
- Growing plants
- Planting out in the garden
- Care and maintenance

All Year 6 classes use their time in the garden to reinforce their understanding of how plants grow e.g. the functions of parts of a plant such as photosynthesis. They are also instructed in the use of different soil improvers, from spent





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mushroom compost to 'ProGro' – a product from Hampshire's doorstep green recycling scheme.

All Year 5 classes use their time in the garden to support their studies of lifecycles and healthy lifestyles.

Year 3 utilise the Eden Project's 'Gardens for Life' project and work to complete the topic 'Plants and Me' that will be exchanged with other schools around the world. This also includes a study of 'food miles' – how far food travels 'from field to fork'.

As part of the Year of Food and Farming a farm visit has been built into the Year 3 curriculum. This is in support of the Year 3 'Healthy Eating' topic whereby all pupils visit a livestock farm to complement the fruit and vegetable production in school. Meat from the farm formed part of the meal cooked at the end of term by the whole school. This project also introduced pupils to the concept of food miles, sustainability and the importance of buying local produce.

3. How well are you achieving your aim?

Portway's Family 'Groundforce' crew were responsible for transforming the garden into a learning resource for pupils. The local Allotment Association (The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners) pledged a team of ten to work with the school every week during the Year. Up until this point support had only been available to the Gardening Club. The 'Grow it, Cook it, Eat it' project enabled this support to be given to every pupil in the school. Through this project, every child in the school is able to access a new growing garden, designed by the children and built by the school and local community, to plant vegetable seeds and garden produce as part of the curriculum and to grow the vegetables in order to harvest, help cook and eat them.



Teachers at Portway Junior School are hampered by the lack of cooking facilities within the school. Prior to the Year of Food and Farming, only foods such as lettuce and tomatoes had been grown and harvested by one year group, as part of a topic to design healthy sandwiches. Through the 'Grow it, Cook it, Eat it' project, each year group was involved in cooking activities either through researching and preparing recipes, costing the meal or through food preparation. The school enlisted the help of Gyles Morris from the Magdalen Project (www.themagdalenproject.org.uk) to provide outdoor cooking facilities for a whole school meal, using the food pupils had grown. The whole school were then collaboratively involved in cooking a meal.

During the Year the school also sold surplus plants raised in the greenhouse and surplus produce from the garden as part of an enterprise project.



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4. What does the school plan to do next?

- To continue to develop pupils' learning about food and farming through growing and cooking activities linked to Think Food and Farming.