

# Growing Schools Case Studies



## Edible Learning

Green grounds and a green canteen at Manchester Creative and Media Academy

### Aim

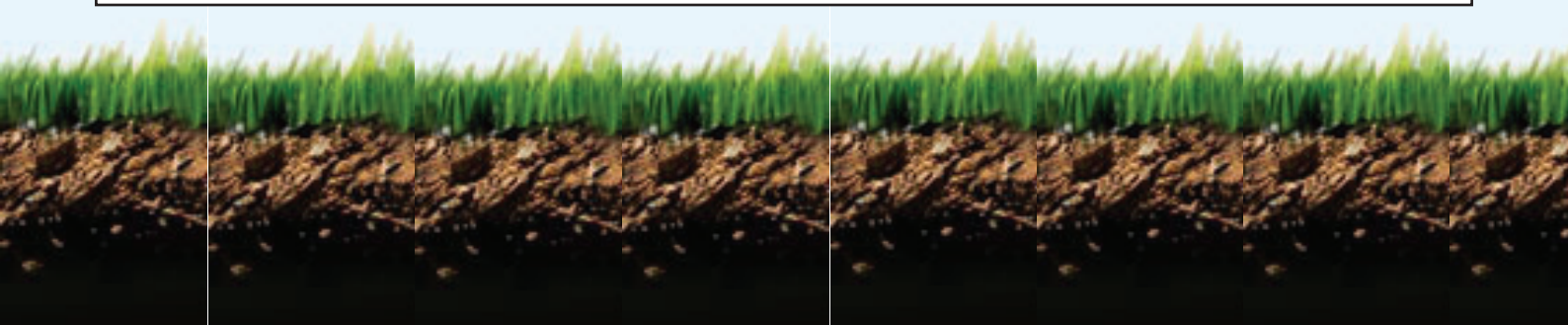
To embed work on sustainability in the school, following the achievement of a Gold Healthy Schools award.

### Action

Applied for Flagship Status with the Food for Life Partnership.

### Outcome

Achieved a Bronze Award and are now working towards a Silver Award



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## Details

Assistant head Jean Rose, Geography teacher Hannah Girvan and head of Design and Technology Harriet Pickworth created a School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) and composed a School Food Policy. The action group involved participation from staff and pupils around the school, including the Head of Science, Canteen Supervisor, Eco-Schools Co-ordinator, the pupils and governors.

### Green Canteen and Green Grounds

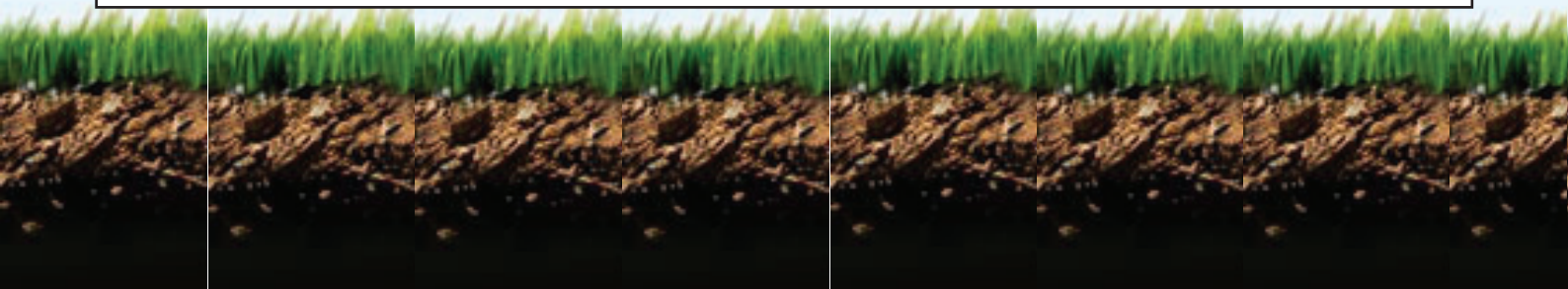
The initial aim was to improve the health and well-being of pupils, however, joining the Food for Life Partnership had widened the remit, and, working closely with the catering manager, Carol Misti, they decided to source their own food. Despite a small price increase, the new, healthier menus have been enthusiastically accepted by parents and pupils and have increased the uptake in school meals. Furthermore, the school has reduced its food miles and the environmental impact of its food by introducing some locally produced and organic ingredients to the menu. Food for Life has supported them by providing a training event at a top restaurant for the canteen staff. The drive towards healthy food and drink is also reflected in the school buildings and grounds. The eating areas have been redesigned to allow for a calmer, more relaxing dining space. Drinking fountains have been installed around the academy so pupils to have access to fresh water without the need for plastic bottles, and they are hoping to return to proper crockery in the canteen which means there will be less waste.

### Sowing Seeds

The on-site organic vegetable garden has been founded with support from the Soil Association and Garden Organic, who are partners in Food for Life. There are raised beds, a poly tunnel for nurturing young plants and a small pond. Action for Sustainable Living (AfSL) has helped the pupils plant seeds, and this year's crop has included raspberries, courgettes, beans, onions and tomatoes. An awayday with the Field Studies Council has funded a small plot of fruit trees, which have been planted with help from AfSL. The pupils have taken their fresh produce out into the local community, holding a stall at Harperhey market and attending the Moston Festival. They have held Harvest Festival celebrations, and made links to support their local primary schools' work towards healthier food and drink.

### Edible Learning

With the involvement of staff from several different disciplines, the sustainable food work at MCMA has been used across the curriculum. The Year 10 Preparation for Working Life course includes a healthy diet module, whilst learning through working in the garden has helped to develop the skills of pupils. In May, they hosted the Cooking Bus, which encourages the development of cooking activities both as part of design and technology and across other curriculum subjects, as well as running cooking sessions for members of the catering staff and other local schools. They ran events for Year 7 and their parents to cook together, fostering links between the work of the academy and the parents. The Eco Team have also learnt about



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food from visiting the Eden Project, staying on an organic farm, joining a conservation weekend on Blencattra and developing links with Unicorn Grocery and Glebelands Farm. Recently, MCMA has encouraged the involvement of the whole school in the garden through Enrichment Fridays. Year 7 groups are also encouraged to work in the gardens, encouraging girls to try new things.

## Future Growth

With a new build approaching, MCMA are hoping to transfer the garden to a site easily accessible for the Technology department so pupils can easily use the herbs and vegetables from the garden in their own cooking lessons. The garden is set to move to the new school grounds in 2012, but Hannah Girvan hopes that this will realise new growing opportunities within the school. Eventually they hope to produce enough vegetables to use in their school meals, and a green roof is also being considered. They will also continue their work with the local primary school, allowing them to use the MCMA's cooking facilities and vegetable garden, and are planning a 'Let's get Cooking' project with young parents from Harper Hey, encouraging parents and children to cook together.

