

# Community Allotment Project

Food Growing Schools: London project



Schools Marketplace, City Hall.

## The Project...

The allotment idea was suggested and implemented by Mrs Wriglesworth, a teacher at Lowther for 20 years. She has recently retired and has left a wonderful team of parent volunteers, school staff, school chefs and inspired children who are maintaining her vision of a school allotment which began in 2008, and is now well established.

The allotment is an 'open zone' of learning where teachers can be as creative as they like. It encourages them to get out of the classroom and let the children experience learning.

The fruit trees and bushes now provide yearly produce which is then used for cooking lessons, teaching the children skills such as how to make preserves, chutneys and lemon curd.

### The project in three words...

COMMUNITY  
EVOLVING  
AMAZING

The allotment also has chickens, compost systems, raised beds, flower beds which are all used as both teaching tools and areas of enjoyment.

### Schools Marketplace

The produce made on the allotment is sold at Christmas and Summer fairs, including the Schools Marketplace at City Hall which took place in October 2014. Lowther sold lemon curd using eggs laid by their own hens.

This event was organised by Capital Growth, a partner of the Food Growing Schools: London project. This project aims to get more schools involved in growing, like Lowther Primary School.

The partnership runs events and training workshops which could kick-start growing in any London school. Visit the website for more information: [www.foodgrowingschools.org](http://www.foodgrowingschools.org)

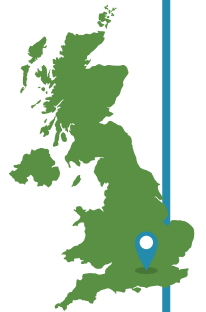


Enjoying the allotment.

### The school...

Lowther Primary School is a small, dynamic community primary school in Barnes, South West London. The school is set in fabulous, large and spacious grounds, which include a brilliant adventure trail and an allotment area where they grow their own healthy vegetables.

The school have a thriving Sustainability Project, look after chickens, grow lots of vegetables, herbs and fruit. Their allotment story is a great example of how an unused patch of playground was transformed into their best outdoor resource.




FOOD GROWING  
SCHOOLS  
LONDON

This case study has been developed as part of the Food Growing Schools: London project, a partnership initiative led by Garden Organic.

Garden Organic is the UK's leading organic growing charity, with over 20 years experience bringing the benefits of growing food to schools.

Food Growing Schools: London is funded by the Big Lottery and Mayor of London to bring together the very best of London's food growing expertise, information and support, with the ambition to inspire and equip every school in London to grow their own food.



Allotment in 2008.

## Community Involvement

Lowther Primary School is very much open to parents who want to come in and help with the school: the allotment, helping children with their reading, or just feeding the hens! It is a learning journey between parents and staff.

There is a network of parents and volunteers which is mainly coordinated through the PTA and ensures tasks are covered especially over the holidays.

The children too are closely involved and many are part of the school's gardening club.

Lowther also have four boys from a local private secondary school who visit weekly to help out, which is invaluable. The school is always trying new and creative ways to get more hands on deck.



All hands on deck!

## Top Tips

Get chickens! – Lowther believe they bring a sense of cohesion and a way to attract new volunteers.

They also sell the eggs which raises money for the allotment.



## Highlights... claim to fame!

A main highlight from this project is that everything that the children do they do it from start to finish. The children love selling their end product and are really enthusiastic and proud when they come back saying "we've sold everything!" The Schools Marketplace was no exception, with the lemon curd flying off the stall.

*"Boris Johnson buying our lemon curd was a big highlight!"*

Tania, School Business Manager

Another highlight is the support the PTA provide, both on the allotment and off; looking for other opportunities to find funding to support the work.



Allotment now.

## Challenges...

Lowther Primary School found that unless there is budget to staff one person whose job is solely to look after the allotment, you need a lead member of staff to organise it even though it is manned predominantly by volunteers.

Working within a tight budget is always a huge challenge. They ask for donations from parents such as bulbs, or a packet of seeds to help, which is a great way to overcome some financial barriers and brings the community even closer together.

## What's next?

Lowther Primary School aims to keep in touch with local community projects and companies, entering competitions and getting involved wherever possible.

Food Growing Schools: London hosts workshops, training and events which any London School can get involved in. One way we celebrate success through awards and competitions, visit our website for more information.

## Curriculum links

The allotment project provides many curricular and cross-curricular opportunities such as:

Giving children the opportunity to learn basic gardening skills.

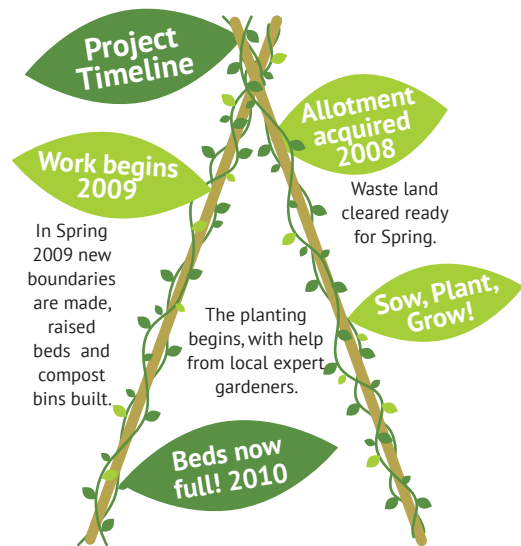
Science: Life cycles.

Enterprise: Links through raising money for the allotment.

RE: Investigating how food is used in religious festivals.

Cooking: All cooking classes use produce from the allotment highlighting food origin and cooking skills.

History: A patch of land dedicated to 'Dig for Victory' a Year 6 topic linked to World War 2.



The gardening club.



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