



## The school...

Charlton Manor Primary School in south-east London has 420 pupils, around half of them qualifying for free school meals. It occupies a 1930s building in a residential area, with roughly 70 sq ft of garden space, and has a teaching kitchen.



## Project growth

Attainment has markedly increased across the board as a result of our approach to food and growing, in fact we've just had our best year's results ever, with all children achieving level 4 plus. The teaching kitchen has been a great addition, contributing to the 'hands-on' approach. For SEN, practical learning and the benefits of seeing the application of the theory into practice, watching that growth, are an inspiration.

## Best resource

The biggest and most helpful resource is our gardener. He keeps the whole place in good shape, and is employed on a full-time basis throughout the year to make sure it's all kept as it should be. It would be too much pressure to put on teachers without the support of someone looking at the garden full time.

## The Project... Tim Baker, Headteacher

The growing at Charlton Manor began around 2004. Headteacher Tim Baker had a vision of a garden within the school, of somewhere safe to grow food. Some children may have access to communal gardens or parks to grow in, but many do not.

This project was special as it had the children's footprint on the growing strategy from the very start – they mapped it out and it was put in place

during that first summer. It's an oasis for them to be safe and to learn.

The allotment and the community garden are off site but are managed by the school. They have shifted not only young people's ideas of where food comes from, and also encouraged parents to take part after school in the gardening club. Fruit, vegetables and plants grow in quantity in these off-site spaces.

*“Tim Baker, the Head, had a vision of a garden within the school, of somewhere safe to grow food”*

Three word project summary...

**INCLUSIVE**  
**ENJOYABLE**  
**ENGAGING**



Carefully watering the young plants



## Who's involved?

There's a high level of commitment across the board, with every teacher involved, at every year-group level. We do all the planning in addition to our main work. Because of the way we work locally, residents who may have no other connection to the school are still very supportive of what we do.

The community garden shows other schools what they can do, or they can join in if they don't have their own spaces. Approximately four or five primaries and one secondary school currently garden with us at the community garden. The idea with the secondary school is to reduce the big challenge of 'transition' between primary and secondary, by getting our year fours, fives and sixes used to being around older children from an earlier age.



The children harvesting Green leaves for the kitchen

## Timeline

Henri the Worm was originally an app that encouraged children aged 3-8 to learn about food and nature, it was the creation of Olivier Blanc and Charlotte Salt. They had a stand at Hampton Court, and when that was over it was installed in our community garden. We also run a cafe which we open up for residents on Saturdays, using locally sourced and school-grown produce.

The Learning Loaf was set up to bake sourdough bread, giving local people the skills to start a microbakery, all through the teaching kitchen.



Children enjoy learning about chickens

## Challenges...

In the early days, getting teachers to see the benefits of this new way of planning and thinking through food and growing was a challenge. Now the garden is the vehicle that drives the curriculum. The garden will always be used as part of the lesson whether that's Maths, Science or Languages.

To help with all the additional work we employ a chef and a gardener.

## Best Bits

Getting our Gold Food for Life accreditation was great, and education professionals and envoys from as far afield as India, New Zealand and Japan have visited to see how we do what we do, through the International Food Day.



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