

# Growing in the Community

Camden, London



A good harvest!

## The Project...

Helen Connor - Headteacher and  
Thomas Moggach, Outdoor Learning Leader

We have four gardens and a smaller 'satellite' site, which is a community garden in which we have a plot. Each one encourages young people's awareness of the natural world. We've been growing here since 2010, with a grant for two raised beds in our car park area. We moved quickly from there with our greenhouse pergola, and then came an outdoor pizza oven!

Over the past five years we've seen the expansion of teaching hours spent in the garden. Growing in the school began as Wednesday afternoons only, but now it's significantly more than that. A lovely, beautiful garden is

actually not much use if children are not in there regularly, really genuinely engaging with it, so we chose to focus our resources on the people who make this happen. Our garden is small but it's very functional. Everything that happens

*"We use the garden for performances and other things, not just gardening."*

around growing in the school is because of Tom, our learning lead, and Kiera, his assistant, so they really are our most valuable resources in that sense.

The outdoor space is used increasingly across the curriculum. We use the garden for performances and other things, not just gardening. We've also run the Outdoor Learning Conference at Rhyl for the last two years, where we invite trainers in schools from London and beyond to share best practice amongst staff. It helps keep the buzz and energy, and raises our profile.

## The school...

Rhyl Primary School was founded in 1895. It is in the Kentish Town area of the London Borough of Camden. There are 460 pupils, 98% of them from Black or Ethnic Minority communities, primarily Bengali and Somali. For 92% of these pupils, English is an additional language.



## Project growth

We want these young people to be able to make educated and healthy choices around food, and we're putting the foundations in for that. They tune into the natural world and the seasons. Our work has helped children to live on this planet with a lighter touch.

We are planning to build an amazing teaching kitchen at Rhyl. It's going to be a specially designed classroom which is a flexible teaching space, with ovens, hobs, sinks, a dining area, interactive whiteboard and roof gardens. We're hoping to open our kitchen by Summer 2016.

The kitchen is intended to give children the opportunities to learn, of course, but also to support families to prepare healthy meals.

Three word project summary...

**CURIOSITY**  
**AWARENESS**  
**EXPLORATION**





Happy children

## Who's involved?



Tom, our learning lead, and his outdoor learning assistant, Kiera, plan our work in the garden. We also have a small but increasing number of engaged parents and a pool of volunteers, our school keepers.

## Timeline

In addition to building parental involvement, our ongoing future plan is the fundraising for Rhyl Street Community Kitchen. Ensuring we have the goodwill and enthusiasm from the community and the local neighbourhood to make this very ambitious project happen is going to be a big challenge.

## Challenges...

We would love more voluntary support. Parental involvement is lower than we would like in the growing aspect of things. The issue is not about support for the idea, but about volunteers having time to come in to school. This is one of our key challenges as a school overall. The more energy and activity there is around growing, the more hours are required.

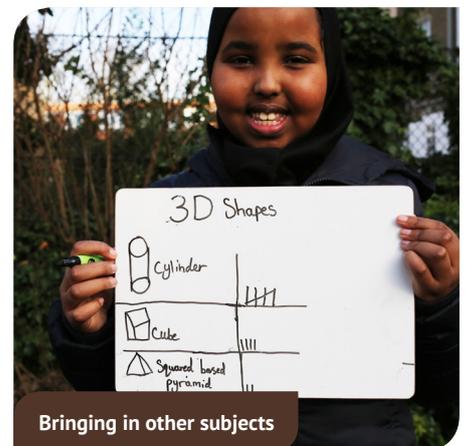
Haverstock, our ward, has one of the highest obesity rates in the borough, and our school has higher obesity than average, so there is an opportunity here to make some positive change. When we have a facility for families to cook together, we can really make a difference.

## Best Bits

Our children already have enthusiasm and energy when they come to school, but we have found that putting a child in front of a mound of dirt builds energy in a way that sitting them behind a desk never could – and if you give that child a trowel, well, they think it's the best thing in the world!



Baking in the pizza oven



Bringing in other subjects

