

The garden is a valuable asset to our school and the children's learning experiences

How does a freshly laid egg feel? How does fresh compost compare to old soil? Where in the garden is the best place for strawberry plants? Would you use a trowel to dig over the potato patch? What could we utilise from school to grow the runner beans up? How should the greenhouse be organised for growing all these seeds? What sort of water should be used for topping up the pond?

From a nursery child counting the fresh eggs laid daily by the school chicken's to a year 3 pupil calculating how many sunflower seeds are needed to comfortably fit into a seed tray. Progressing to a year 6 pupil planning and designing next year's crop rotation with just 3 vegetable beds, gardening encompasses a learning experience for all age groups in our primary school and spans all different levels of educational subjects especially Design and Technology.

All pupils at Charlton Manor Primary School take part in working in our school garden. At all ages this encourages every individual to develop skills and experience many different practical tasks expanding their knowledge and understanding (in addition to what they gain in the classroom). Pupils get to work individually or as teams where they all learn from each other's experiences and observations.

With lunch time clubs in the garden every day, after school gardening clubs during the week and all classes using the garden area during the week for lessons the garden is a valuable asset to our school and the children's learning experiences. What's natural, what's man made? Measuring plants and structures in the garden to create graphs. Planting seeds in different soils and environments and monitoring how the plants grow. Using the correct tools for jobs in and around the garden. Designing and planning in the school garden and for their own gardens. Using iPads for photos and creating project work about the garden. Constructing frames for climbers and setting up mini poly tunnels. Making bird feeders from pine cones and constructing bird houses. Building components of a beehive and frames from flat packed kits. These are just some of the practical examples of what we get our pupils involved in.

Photo and caption:

At Charlton Manor Primary School we are passionate about gardening and involving all pupils at all levels in this essential outdoor classroom environment.

N Shelley, Gardener at Charlton Manor Primary School

