

St. James' Catholic Primary School Allotment Project Summer 2013

St. James' has a tiny area of land just outside the Year 2 classroom, which for years has mainly been neglected. Some attempts had been made to grow vegetables and other plants on this small patch of land, but the hard clay soil, made it extremely difficult to manage.

This year we decided, with some determination, to combat this problem and set up an allotment space for our Year 1 and Year 2 children.

The main aims of the project were to increase children's knowledge and understanding of where fruit and vegetables come from, to observe the growth process and to begin to understand the roles of the different parts of a plant. Other integral aims were to boost children's self-esteem, encourage team work and communication skills, develop a respect for the environment and a responsibility for the plants in their care.

Mrs. Darby, one of our invaluable Key Stage 1 Teaching Assistants, has led the project with six Key Stage 1 children. With the help of one of our grandparents, Keith Rowbottom, the once neglected space has been transformed into an amazing working allotment.



The area outside our Year 2 classroom - Keith, one of our granddads, spent a considerable amount of time weeding and smartening the land. After this he began erecting trellising.

After several attempts at digging the soil, we decided that planters would be far easier to grow the vegetables in. Keith spent several days making boxes and trellising. He also slabbed and edged the area to enable the children to have easy access.

When the initial hard was completed the children began planting the seeds. These included:

- *rocket lettuce*
- *strawberries*
- *turnips*
- *carrots*
- *potatoes*
- *tomatoes*
- *sweet peas*
- *broad beans*



Our head gardener having a rest before filling some of our planters with compost.

The children have looked after the garden by watering and weeding and many more children have been involved as the project has developed. They have kept a journal of the growing process, regularly measuring the plants growth and creating labelled drawings. The children have carried out computer research about the different types of vegetables and how we can link these to a healthy lifestyle.

More and more children have become involved in the project. Some of our gifted and talented artists in Year 2 used their painting skills to decorate our planters.



Our first vegetables, lettuces and radishes, were harvested at the beginning of July and the turnips followed some time later. All our produce has ended up in the school salad bar to be enjoyed by everyone. The fruit and vegetables are currently being tended by our dedicated staff during the summer holidays, so by September we will have a considerable amount of harvesting to do.



A proud moment for us all. Our first harvest of lettuces and radishes.



Although still very much in its infancy, both staff and children have been inspired. Our Head Teacher, Mrs. Backen, has been so impressed that she would like the allotment area to be expanded in order for more children to become involved.

Plans are already in place for the area outside our Year 1 classroom to be developed.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the kind donation of Mrs Anne Kendrick's birthday gifts. The several packets of seeds and the many tools provided certainly helped to kick start our wonderful new project.

We all look forward to a fruitful new school year in September.

Lindsey Hall
Key Stage 1 Phase Leader

