



Case studies

Community gardens and schools

Our Scotland team have produced two case studies about community gardens who either have school groups regularly using their site, or who have their garden based on school grounds.

The case studies highlight both the benefits to the project and for the young people who get to take part.

The case studies can be read alongside our factsheet "Growing with Families, Groups and Schools", which has lots of practical considerations, games, design tips and is available to download from: www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources

Every1's Garden, Dundee

Every1's Garden is a project located in the Maxwelltown Information Centre at the heart of one of the most deprived areas in Dundee.

The four local primary schools each have an allocated area in the garden for growing fruit and vegetables, which they maintain by bringing small groups and sometimes full classes to the centre to cultivate their plots. The project provides school activity sessions within the garden and outdoor classroom, as well as outreach sessions aimed at Eco groups within the schools.





This project enables schools to fulfil their responsibilities with respect to the Outdoor Learning Strategy as well as offering varied and engaging topics that coincide with the Curriculum for Excellence.

The opportunity to do outdoor learning is invaluable and have many of the children who do not engage in school are thriving within the garden. Many teachers have noted the change in behaviour of some of the more challenging pupils, saying they are more “relaxed” and “willing to learn” in the garden environment. Pupils also feel the impact, with one saying the project was important as they were “being trusted to do the good jobs” giving them a sense of responsibility and increased confidence.

Although schools are encouraged to be more independent while in the garden, many of the teachers do not feel confident enough to

hold sessions themselves, so the project has a part-time garden worker who supports the school groups.

The project has overcome many challenges. Finding the time to immerse entire classes of 20+ pupils with only one project worker and two support staff has been extremely difficult. Many schools insist on entire class visits to ensure each pupil has taken part in the garden, however this makes it difficult to engage fully with individuals, immersing them in the journey of planting a seed to harvesting and cooking. Schools are now asked to provide an activity so classes can be split into two more manageable groups: one working alongside the garden worker, one engaged in the alternative activity - and then swapping over.

Finding financial support to not only keep the garden productive but paying for staff wages has been problematic, as many funders prefer supporting new projects. The project is investigating social enterprise and other alternative means of fundraising to develop and sustain the project.

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3 Hills Community Garden

3Hills Community Garden sits within the grounds of Clevees Primary School and Burnbrae Children’s Centre in the Priesthill area of Glasgow. It has an orchard, soft fruit beds, a polytunnel, tool store, potting shed, wildlife garden and over 20 raised beds of varying heights to make them accessible to all ages and abilities. It is open to the wider community during school hours and to plot-holders outside these hours.

The maintenance is carried out as a partnership with the grounds maintenance teams from Glasgow Council’s Land & Environmental Services and the garden committee. Pupils actively manage their own growing spaces and cultivate and learn about fresh fruit and vegetables. The garden has increased the knowledge of many pupils, as well as improved their relationship with fresh food. It has proved useful at engaging pupils who might at times be unhappy in a more formal classroom setting.

A part-time gardener has been in post since its opening and funding was secured for a full-time post for 2016 funded by Glasgow City Council, NHS and Glasgow Housing Association.

The schools have access to the knowledge and skills of the gardener at all times and regular gardening sessions are held two days per week.

The gardener also helps deliver elements of the school curriculum and works with nursery-primary transition groups, a nurture group and runs an after school Gardening Club that further develops pupils’ interests and helps maintain the area. The presence of the gardener during school holidays and the nursery’s 52 week status means the





school is rarely closed; which helps with garden maintenance. The staff increasingly access the community garden with pupils in both formal and informal sessions.

The garden has a high perimeter fence with several security cameras. The garden is an attraction to local young people out with school hours but vandalism has largely been infrequent and small scale and most people would agree that the advantages of having the

garden within school grounds far outweigh the disadvantages. The gardeners are conscious of their privileged access to the space and value it, resulting in their keen awareness of the need to keep the garden area stimulating, safe and tidy.

The garden was initially funded by a partnership of the NHS and Glasgow City Council Development & Regeneration Services' City Design Greenspace team and opened in 2013.

The school also fundraises through car boot sales etc. Education Services have not yet contributed financially to the running of the garden. No formal lease exists for the garden but it has tacit approval from Education Services and is generally recognised as a valuable community and school resource.

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