

Subject Report Horticulture

Horticulture as a vehicle for learning

Our vision is for horticulture to inspire children; encouraging them to be inquisitive about the world; working outdoors on the school allotment nurtures their innate curiosity and enables them to develop a range of skills that are useful across their learning both now and in their future lives.

There is a range of evidence that supports the idea that regular contact with nature can benefit a wide range of children including those on the autistic spectrum, those with emotional and behavioural difficulties and with learning problems. Importantly research highlights that children's senses are stimulated by nature and that the experiences form children's relationships with natural areas in a way that is often remembered into adult life. Literature in this area has identified the need to keep children connected to nature and natural landscapes. It has also suggested that children develop better when they have access to outdoor learning. This learning it has been suggested can impact on their cognitive learning, their behaviour and social interactions as well as their wellbeing. Academic progress has also been linked to exposure to the outdoors as well as learning about horticulture through horticultural experiences. Links have been made to health and wellbeing through nutrition-based programmes. As well as the use of the environment for learning there is the impact that the landscape itself can have on pupils. Increasing children's access to the outdoors can have a positive impact on pupil performance.

The Royal Horticultural Society study (2010) reviewed the work it had done implementing gardening activities in schools. The review was done in two parts; a desk study of all schools involved in school gardening and a case study of ten schools. Cognitive outcomes were reported including Science, Maths and Literacy. There were some good examples of pupils being involved in practical tasks to develop learning and thinking as well as comments that show the enjoyment of being outside. Confidence and self-esteem were an area that the study reported success, with children overcoming fear of touching worms or insects and learning to understand that getting dirty was part of the process. Behaviour impact, in relation to eating, was reported as positive with pupils developing a willingness to try new foods.

Fundamental British Values

We promote Fundamental British values at Hope House School by giving our pupils opportunities to develop enquiring minds by creating an atmosphere where all questions are valued. We encourage everyone to value each other's opinions and values and provide activities that involve turn-taking, sharing and collaboration. We

aim to ensure that pupils understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequences, helping them to distinguish right from wrong. Staff work with pupils to create classroom rules and codes of behaviour, such as agreeing the rules about keeping our classroom tidy and ensure that pupils understand that rules apply to everyone. We create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance at Hope House School, where all views, faiths, cultures and races are valued. We encourage a range of experiences that allow pupils to explore feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand everyone is free to have different opinions. We provide opportunities for pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example, through allowing children to take risks.

Recovery Curriculum

Our pupils will work on following a recovery curriculum which will include social and therapeutic horticulture sessions to reduce feelings of stress and anxiety. The recovery curriculum focuses on improvement of physical health through exercise and learning, improvement of mental health through a sense of purpose and achievement, being given the opportunity to connect with others – reducing feelings of isolation or exclusion, acquiring new skills to increase confidence and promote feeling better for being outside, being in touch with nature and in the great outdoors.

Remote Learning

Pupils who are not attending school due to the pandemic or other circumstances will have access to remote learning packs and timetabled virtual meetings via zoom. Each session is tailored towards the pupil's individual learning styles and specific needs. Both the learning packs and virtual sessions will follow the planned curriculum where possible.

Planning

Our curriculum is carefully planned to engage and excite all our pupils. Our long-term and medium-term plans are produced to provide pupils with opportunities to develop gardening knowledge and skills and use them effectively. Pupils work to achieve an ASDAN award in either horticulture or gardening. These specific courses define what we will teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term.

Assessment

The assessment of pupil's work is on-going to ensure that understanding is being achieved and that progress is being made. Feedback is given to pupils as soon as possible and is marked in accordance with the school's Marking Policy. Practical lessons provide hands on, kinaesthetic learning ensuring concrete understanding.

Assessment is largely based through questioning and verbal discussion, as well as recorded work. We are currently developing a progress tracker system for assessment.

Enrichment opportunities

The garden and allotment provide a stimulating programme of visits and activities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. These activities enhance the curriculum, providing enriching experiences to aid our pupils' personal development. Each year pupils enjoy taking part in the Grow Your Own Potatoes project. Launched in 2005, Grow Your Own Potatoes (GYOP) was one of the first primary school based growing projects. Since then, it has become the largest of its kind with over 5 million children taking part in learning where potatoes come from, how they grow and the health benefits. We aim to involve pupils in community events such as the RHS flower show school competitions and the RSPB Big School Birdwatch as much as possible.