

Sherington Nature Garden

Background

The nature area was an overgrown and under used space. Accessibility was poor and the garden was not useable all year round.

Purpose

The nature garden is to provide learning opportunities for pupils from Early Years through to Key Stage Two:

- Outdoor learning brings to life subjects across the curriculum and helps to develop life skills.
- Outdoor group activities support spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, and give all pupils the chance to experience nature directly.



The nature garden also provides opportunities for staff, pupils, parents, carers and the local community to work together on a shared project to enhance and enrich the school community.

Overview of Design & Build

A community project from the outset we canvassed the opinions of all stakeholders - leading to the creation of a garden brief.

Our community wanted a garden that would be:

- Colourful and inviting – with year round interest and productivity
- Accessible
- Maintainable
- Multi-purpose
- A space and resource to support teaching and learning across the curriculum
- Enable us to grow and harvest crops for use in the school kitchen
- A project to bring the wider school community together

Phase One – Inspiration

We visited the Wide Horizons Centre and Charlton Manor Primary for inspiration and examples of good practice.

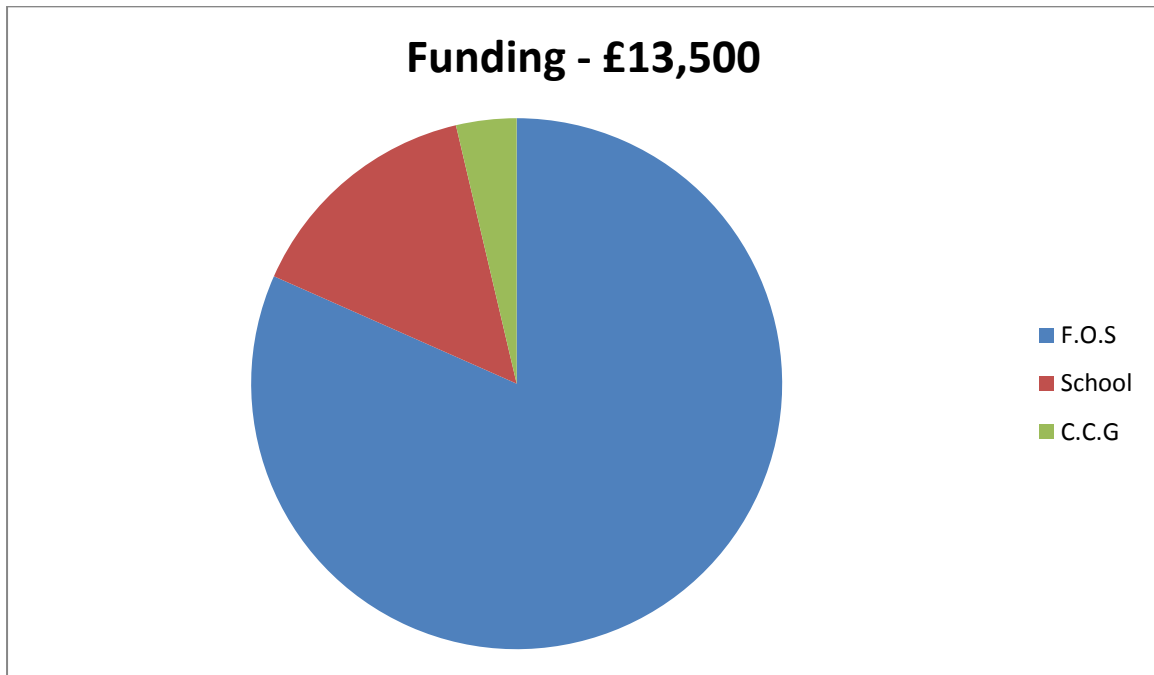
Phase Two – Community Buy In

We set about seeking volunteers from within the school and the local community who had the necessary skill set and experience to support us. We formed a garden sub group that included the Friends of Sherington (F.O.S) and Charlton Community Gardeners (CCG).

Phase Three – Funding



The vast majority of funding for this project came from the F.O.S. who worked tirelessly to raise the money needed through community fund raising events. CCG were also successful in their application for a Capital Clean up Grant from the Mayor of London which increased the budget.



Phase Four – Garden Design

Karen Sibley Garden Designs was commissioned to create a garden design and planting plan.



Phase Five – Landscaping

Land Contractors were employed to redevelop the garden.



Garden Features

The garden has been designed to engage all ages, and with scope to allow for links to be made in learning across the curriculum.

Accessibility:

- Step free access to the garden and deck area, rubber chip paths (washable), wide path around pond, gated access at either end of the garden

Compost Area:

- Composting school food waste, plans for a wormery

Mosaics:

- Produced by Emergency Exit Arts who worked with KS2 pupils during Arts Week 2014

Nature Garden:

- Two wild flower meadows to attract bees and butterflies with moveable oak stumps for seating

Pond:

- Shallow water feature to aid aeration, children can explore pond life with ease of access

Outdoor Classroom:

- Raised decking area with non-slip (all weather) decking

Pergola:

- To provide structure for climbers to create a green tunnel and to give the garden a sense of privacy from the main school building, children will be able to explore how sound is affected

Planting:

- A living rockery to be planted with herbs, alpines and rockery plants is hardy enough for pupils to walk or scramble over when discovering scents
- Apple tress fanned against wall (donated by CCG and Brogdale National Fruit Collection), children can use statistics to help describe the apple harvest
- Planting boxes to provide fruit, veg and salad for the school kitchen and cooking lessons

The Future

Science Week 2015 celebrations, across the school, will be centred on the nature garden in March in the hope that this will kick start regular use of the space across all subjects.

The school plans to become a part of the network of food growing schools, and a weekly Gardening Club will help to maintain the garden, and grow and harvest crops for the school kitchen and cooking lessons.

With the help of the F.O.S, we need to continue to raise funds so that pupils have access to high quality resources to support their learning within the garden. We intend to use the garden as inspiration for other collaborative community projects within the school grounds.

Grand Opening

On Monday 16th March, Chris Collins the Blue Peter Gardener will officially open the new garden. The school will give thanks to the F.O.S, in-particular Hilary Piggott who has worked tirelessly on this project, and everyone else who has helped to create such an amazing space for learning within our school grounds.

Friends of Sherington

If you would like to join the Friends of Sherington or find out more about the work they do please contact Victoria Cranna: vcranna@hotmail.co.uk

Charlton Community Gardeners

If you would like to find out more about the work that C.C.G do local please visit their website below.

www.charltoncommunitygardens.org.uk

Use and Maintenance

Sherington Primary School is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the garden. The school very much welcomes and appreciates the ongoing support of the F.O.S and volunteers in the upkeep and maintenance of the garden.

In order to maximise the availability of the garden for time-tabled use across the curriculum weekly slots will be timetabled on Tuesday or Friday for volunteers to have access to the school garden during the school day.

Hilary Piggott of the Friends of Sherington will support the after school gardening club every Monday from 3:30-4:30.

In all cases volunteers will gain access to the garden via the school office where they will be given an identity badge and asked to sign in and out. Any adult visiting the garden unaccompanied by a member of staff on a regular basis, during school hours will require a DSB.

Access to the garden at any other time, including the school holidays, is through prior arrangement with the school; who retain the keys to the garden.

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the garden is well used, maintained and made best use of. A timetable is in place to ensure that all classes make regular use of the garden to

support learning across the curriculum. All children will be responsible for helping to maintain and develop this space.