

CASE STUDY

THE GROWING SCHOOLS GARDEN

LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Culture and Creativity Sector

Fair Oak Infant School, Eastleigh, Hampshire

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Why we got involved

We have recently completed our own £40k garden project in school, the Children's World Garden, which includes planting and other features for our 12 class countries. Our four Reception classes are named after the countries of the British Isles: England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales; our Year 1 classes after other European countries: Italy, Spain, Holland and Denmark; and our Year 2 classes are America, India, Australia and Japan. The name of the garden was chosen by the children. We have a strong focus in school on Internationalism and are one of very few infant schools in the country to have the British Council's International School Award.

We were invited to participate in the Hampton Court Project because of our own garden, and to take an international theme because of our international focus. We had been nominated by one of our parents who used to work for Learning through Landscapes and who had been involved in our own garden design.

We are always keen to participate in such projects because of the fantastic opportunities they provide for our pupils. A couple of years ago we made a tapestry for a Commonwealth-wide Golden Tapestry project to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee and our work was exhibited in Melbourne at the Commonwealth Games. We also find that such projects provide great opportunities for staff, parents and the local community to get involved.

What we made for the garden, to represent Culture and Creativity

For the Evolutionary Path, children drew people, animals and plants from various stages in the evolutionary process so that these could be engraved onto the planks for the path. This was the same technique used for the 12 class-totem-poles in our playground.

Every child in the school (360 pupils) was invited to make a tree dressing at home based on traditional or new ideas relating to their class country. Tree dressings not taken to Hampton Court have been hung in our own grounds.

Our two mosaics show our school logo of a child watering seeds by an oak tree and the detail of the watering can sprinkling water on the seeds. Materials for this were donated by local suppliers. The mosaics were designed by a teacher, and a parent made them with the children. We love them so much we are going to make some for our school grounds.

Our three banners feature pupils' drawings of items they chose to represent their class country. We wish these could also be replicated for our school!

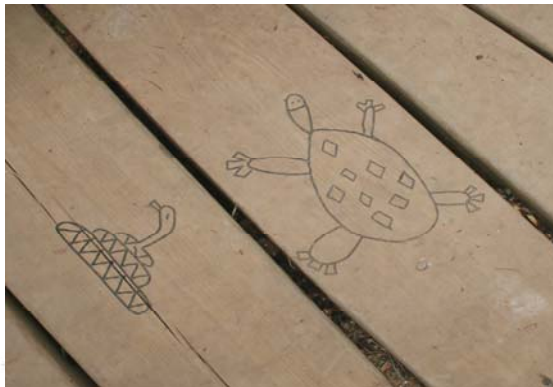
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What we learned

- The excitement of participating in a high-profile, fun project
- Raising awareness of Hampton Court and gardens generally
- Making links between our garden and the one at Hampton Court
- Learning about the tradition of tree dressing
- Working with family members to create a tree dressing, preferably using recycled materials. The dressings were all shown in assembly and the children were photographed with their dressing for a book – they were all very proud of their work
- Learning about evolution and showing what they already knew
- Special opportunity for gifted artists to create the banners
- Opportunity to make a mosaic
- Further developing their knowledge of the world.

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Photo gallery



Quotes

*'I enjoyed designing a person to put on the path. I was excited to be allowed to do the designing.'*Morgan

*'I liked making my tree dressing because I used recycled things.'*Beccy

'I liked making the windows for my Viking ship because they are different colours. It looks beautiful in the tree.' Ryan, Denmark Class

'It was exciting making the mosaic because I have never made one before. I used tiles and stones and it looked pretty when it was finished.' Kate

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'I liked making the banner because it was such fun to do. I think people will love the Japanese lady.' Sam, Japan Class

'We feel very proud of our school and the things we have made.'
Australia Class

Other information

Other 'learning outside the classroom' activities include

- School visit to Itchen Valley Country Park – using senses as do animals, pond-dipping, hunting mini-beasts, Country Code
- Lambs brought to school
- Walks to the village and to a local meadow to look at habitats
- Making Andy Goldsworthy artworks
- Visits to Portchester Castle, the Spinnaker Tower etc.
- Our fab playground with a willow tunnel, trim-trail, playground markings, etc. which the children have helped design.

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