

# Evaluation of Environmental Study Support

## Small Grant scheme 2006-07

In Autumn Term 2006, all Hackney schools were given an opportunity to apply for small grants to support their environmental projects. Upon submission of approved action plans, 15 schools were awarded £200 grants to support their projects. This report highlights some of the successes of the scheme, after revisiting the projects at the end of the academic year.

“A whole new planting area, wildlife garden and lots more” – as part of their Healthy Schools bid **Our Lady & St Joseph Primary School** created a vegetable and herb garden, with whole school participation and help from enthusiastic staff and parent volunteers. The garden is used for science and environmental studies during curriculum time. The school was nominated for the Sustainable Schools teaching awards category last year.



**St Matthias Primary School** purchased tools, containers, seeds, plants and trees to support the after school gardening project, where LSA Joan Henry shares her love of gardening with pupils who learn gardening skills and easy gardening designs. The ‘concrete jungle’ playground has been improved by areas of container gardening, including a vegetable / herb area, flowers and fruit trees.



The after school club at **Harrington Hill Primary School** created a sensory garden as a learning resource and to actively involve children in growing plants. Pupils chose what type of garden they wanted by voting in a whole-school assembly (the choice was a sensory garden, a vegetable garden, a wildlife garden or a drought tolerant garden). The new garden features a pebble path, bulbs, strawberries, grasses, bamboo, wildflowers and herbs. The school asked parents to help, and some have kindly done so.



**Sir Thomas Abney Primary School** used their grant to buy educational resources to support outdoor learning for children with challenging behaviour. The new pond-dipping equipment (nets, trays, magnifiers, ID guides) is being used by two weekly support clubs as well as classes during curriculum time. But the main focus in 2007 has been the new organic kitchen garden, where the children have grown a variety of vegetables in the new greenhouse and raised beds. “The assembly went very well and more... Sir Thomas Abney got a good OFSTED report making a clear point about the ECO garden so we're extra pleased.”



**Woodberry Down Community Primary School** have developed a beautiful quiet area in their playground, featuring benches, containers with flowers and a pebbled area. Children in the after school club did the work. The area is popular with staff and pupils alike. On the other side of the rabbit cage an enclosed area where monitors can exercise the rabbits has been created, with raised beds for growing vegetables.



At **Hackney Free Secondary School** the grant has enabled the purchase of resources throughout the year to support the Friday after-school gardening project... pupils from local Morningside Primary school have come each week to work alongside students-at-risk-of-exclusion from Hackney Free to help transform a neglected corner of the school grounds into vegetable growing plots. The project has been very positive, involving teamwork, peer mentoring, and a transition element.



**St Monica's RC Primary School** put their grant towards the purchase of a new pond-liner and building materials for a path to improve access in the nature garden (match funded from the school budget). These were installed by a team of corporate volunteers from UBS bank over two summer workdays. Children have been using the nature area for exploration, planting and gardening activities during the weekly after school nature club on Thursdays.



The after school wildlife club at **Mandeville Primary School** have bought resources for developing a sensory garden and bird feeders for the wildlife garden – “A few years ago, our children would have destroyed all this, but now they don't – they take care of it.”



For **Horizon Special School (Secondary)**, the grant has supported the successful ongoing after-school garden club over the course of the year. Seeds, plants and equipment have been bought to enable the students involved to grow and eat a range of vegetables in the school garden – including potatoes, onions, carrots, beans and rhubarb. Two of the departing students won ACIS (Active Citizenship in Schools) certificates for completing 50 hours of voluntary service through the club, which also helps to develop social skills.



