

# Berrywood: A School within a Garden



Welcome to the first edition of our 'School within a Garden' magazine. This is an opportunity for us to showcase our school ethos and share the progress we are making towards our school vision of cultivating young people who are able to think critically and creatively about the world they live in; can we equip them with the skills to consider how human choices and actions can impact our physical world? To do this, our curriculum has evolved to provide the opportunity for children to reflect on such a question, from the harsh environment of the Arctic tundra to the journey of a seemingly innocent plastic bottle in the Pacific Ocean.

Now, our attention turns to our immediate environment. How can we protect and enhance our own setting? How can we provide the opportunity for all children to be part of the journey?



Our Market Place journey has been fast paced and thoroughly enthralling. The passionate team who work tirelessly to provide expertly led, personalised sessions, allow all children in their groups to thrive, learn new skills and feel empowered. Every product made has a tangible link to our school grounds whether that be produce in our cooking, repurposed wood in our bee hotels or natural resources gathered for decorations and ornaments. The children then have the responsibility of setting up the markets, calculating costings, organising signage and being on the front line of customer interactions.

Initially a project involving only Key Stage two pupils, the doors have now opened for the inclusion of all year groups. Each year group are in the busy process of creating unique, handmade items for our future markets. Having seen the groups in actions, the enthusiasm, excitement and buzz around the learning is palpable – a truly magical thing to be a part of.

In following editions of the magazine, we will hear from the children involved who will update us on their year groups. Exciting times are ahead.

Mrs Woods

## Why Not a School?

Give Nature a Home. That's what the RSPB encourage us to do. And millions of families are doing just that – making place in their gardens for birds, butterflies, hedgehogs and bees. Farmers, too, are managing their land to help threatened countryside birds like Turtle Doves, Nightingales and Yellowhammers. Even businesses are getting in on the act and thinking how they can respond to Britain's biodiversity crisis. So...if gardeners, farmers and businesses can do it; *why not a school?*

Berrywood has 4.3 hectares of land and we have a rich heritage of caring for nature. We pride ourselves on being a School in a Garden and, each Spring and Summer, our flowerbeds are alive with the glorious sights and sounds of pollinating insects. Our pond and woodland areas add further value to wildlife and learning in these spaces has been enjoyed by each successive cohort of children. But we want to up our game...

We at Berrywood are asking ourselves the question, *how can we maximise the biodiversity of our grounds?* And we strongly believe engaging children in this endeavour will boost their educational experience. Not only will exposure to nature in high quality habitats develop their understanding, being part of the positive response to our current biodiversity crisis will help children to think critically about the values they need in order to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Why not a school indeed!

By Mr Roy

Berrywood TV was launched in October 2022, involving 22 year 6 children, known as PET's (Production and Editorial Teams). Through this amazing opportunity, these children are developing skills and knowledge of videography, sound engineering and editing - including the use of green screen. One of the roles for the PET's is to record the many events which happen in and around our school community. One of the events they filmed was the Berrywood Market Day, on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022. The team spent time filming the setup of the market as well as capturing the buzz and excitement of our community, taking great pride in being creative with the angles, positioning and framing of the shots, as they perused and bought a vast amount of the products. Since then, the PET's have been creatively editing together the footage and have interviewed a number of the children, who are involved in Market Days, as well as some of the staff to find out about their roles in producing the many products on sale.

This video will be available soon for our community to watch.

By Mr Hawkins





It is my pleasure to be the member of staff who seeks out opportunities for our Berrywood children to take part in community activities and initiatives. Where possible, I ensure that these are environmentally themed, so that we are not only having a positive impact in our community, but also upon our planet.

So far, our participation has included taking part in the nationwide initiative 'Walk to School Week', which benefits our fitness as well as promoting less car use - reducing congestion and pollution. We have also adopted our local train station, where groups of children have enjoyed regular litter-picks, planted tubs and hanging baskets, using some plants which were reused from the Year 3 'Growing' topic, painted a large planter that SWR donated and created an art installation which can be seen on platform one. There have been regular art competitions to brighten up the windows of the waiting room and at Christmas, the Year R children visited Santa for a story, hanging their gorgeous hand-made decorations on the station tree. Each one, made using recycled or natural materials. Not only does this liaison keep our station looking attractive, it promotes train use.

We entered a vibrant 'walking float' in Hedge End carnival, spending weeks making our costumes and banners from scraps and recycled resources.

Last year, we established a collaboration with the near-by care home, Snowdrop Place. As well as shared reading and singing performances, a group regularly visits the home to do craft activities with the residents. The last group used old Christmas cards to make new ones. The elderly sharing time with the young has proved wonderfully beneficial to both parties!

I am hoping to extend our community projects further in the future and would welcome your ideas.

*By Mrs Yeoman*

There is an incredible amount that can be learned from the world around us when we stop and breathe in our surroundings. The natural world is constantly in motion with changes through the seasons which can all be used to inspire and teach our children. **Little Leaves** works with the children to help them develop a passion for nature. Gardening involves numerous activities, from watching plants grow to hearing the children enjoying throwing the autumnal leaves into the air, from watching the animals around us and counting birds to creating habitats that encourage more wildlife, from touching and understanding how the soil works to planting seeds. Through all this the children are able to grow in their understanding of what happens when we spend a little time working with, and looking after, our surroundings.



**Little Leaves** gardening encourages the children to get involved in their surroundings and learn to respect and care for the environment around us. It does this whilst also being productive, growing vegetables and fruit down at the school allotment. Discovering how food is grown is an important learning journey for the children as well as having the satisfaction at the end of it of seeing actual produce that they will be able to harvest. The allotment was a blank canvas back in September and with the help of the children is beginning to take shape with some winter vegetables and fruit bushes having been planted.

The **Little Leaves** have learned how to grow plants from seeds, sets and bulbs, and how to propagate new plants using off cuts from the main plant. This next term will involve planning for spring and therefore more planting and growing and thinking about how you can utilise a small growing space to produce flowers and vegetable together to create both a haven for wildlife and delicious home grown produce.

*By Mrs Douglas*

### Get Involved!

Are you a budding gardener or someone who enjoys tackling a new project? We are looking for volunteers to help us maintain and develop our school gardens. Please contact Mrs Woods, via the school office, if you would like to join our school within a garden community. We look forward to hearing from you.

