



# Press release

## Bagshot Infant School allotment at RHS Hampton Court Garden Festival 2024

At Bagshot Infant School our Year Two children have been busy designing and creating their allotment exhibit ready to show at RHS Hampton Court Garden Festival. This year's allotment is named 'Grow to learn; learn to Grow' and reflects our ambition to create the next generation of gardeners.

The school can trace its rich history back to 1870 and its school garden to 1908. The school's grounds were converted to allotments during both World Wars as a contribution to the war effort to feed the nation.

Our garden was neglected for many years from the 1970s, but in 2014, to coincide with the anniversary of WW1, we recreated the allotment garden, and it has thrived ever since. It is accessible to those children at Bagshot Infant School with Special Needs and disabilities and features a no-threshold greenhouse, wheelchair friendly pathways and upright planters that children in chairs and walking frames can tend. Our garden is self-funding; we sell produce, including jams and chutneys that we make from our school garden fruits and vegetables. All proceeds are ploughed back into the garden. We make our own compost and harvest rainwater to irrigate the garden.

Our allotment is called *Grow to learn: learn to Grow*!. Our aim is to inspire our children with a love of gardening as part of our broad and balanced curriculum. All children take part in our annual potato growing competition, our Year 1 children help sow seeds and plant out our

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playground raised growing beds, and our Year 2 children (6-7 years old) are actively involved in gardening every week.

The children have enthusiastically been planting seeds, eagerly awaiting green shoots, and then tending to the plants which now feature in our allotment display at RHS Hampton Court. Gardening is an important aspect of Bagshot Infant School's curriculum and our children have learned what plants need to thrive and how we can make our garden productive, enjoyable, sustainable self-sufficient and a home to wildlife.

Our allotment immerses our children in both science and technology; in addition to learning how to grow a wide variety of plants, we also have solar panels on our shed, to fuel a water pump which irrigates our upcycled pallet living wall of herbs and alpine strawberries. We have balanced new technology with the use of traditional gardening methods such as the hazel bean poles and beech pea sticks.

Our allotment features a diverse range of vegetables, fruit, herbs and flower plants, split into four themed areas: seed bed, grow to cook, fruits and herbs, and because our children love strawberries, a dedicated strawberry patch too. We have created a sensory pathway from bricks left over from when the school's 150-year-old roof was replaced in 2020, which we have threaded with fragrant herbs.

Some of our children will be at the allotment throughout the garden festival demonstrating how we make newspaper flowerpots to transplant seedlings.

Bagshot Infant School children using our school garden.



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