

## Sandlings Primary School



### **More than pure sand**

As its name suggests, this school in the east of the county is on the lightest of soils, but a tremendous amount of work has gone into making the vegetable plots fertile and productive. The vegetable plots are in the centre of the school garden and almost have the feel of a set of allotments, with each class in charge of their own bed and able to compare how their plants are growing.

### **A lot of progress in a few years**

The surrounding flower beds and grassy quiet area were put in as a millennium project, paid for by the PTA, and the vegetable garden was added for 2006, within the framework of the Healthy Schools programme. After a tentative first year, the crops in 2007 have grown very well and the children enjoyed harvesting their lettuces, potatoes, peas and broad beans, and are looking forward to their carrots, nasturtiums, beetroot and squash. The Suffolk County Catering Kitchen Garden project seeds were eagerly planted and the collection was augmented by other seeds the children chose. Few of the children had any gardening experience before though some talk about working in their grandparents' gardens.



*Jarrard taking out some weeds.*

### **All the children take part**

Mrs Debra Scurrill Key Stage 2 Leader has led the project and Sue Gay, school caretaker has some of her hours working in the garden – including a dedicated session working with children on Friday afternoons. One class each week sends children out into the garden to learn about vegetable and flower gardening.



### **The excitement of a radish**

“The first radish was a major event” said Sue, “the children had been keeping a close eye on it and were very excited about it being picked. But the best thing for me has been the general enjoyment the children get from seeing what they’ve grown. The foundation year children were almost bursting with pride when they were able to present Mrs Tina Platt, the school cook, with their tub of freshly dug potatoes. It was a real “Wow” moment for them.”

### **Caring for and using the garden is all about teamwork**

Some of the day-to-day tasks are taken on by the two gardening monitors appointed termly among the year 6 children. They do any watering which is needed and make sure that the tools are safely stowed away in the shed. Sue has been delighted that children quite often ask to help her in the garden if they see her working there during their breaks.

### **Future plans**

A new and bigger composting area is planned to make life easier. The school council has discussed the idea of each newly elected school council planting a commemorative fruit tree. Timing is always one of the trickiest parts of running a garden and although the early start to planting went well this year, next year they plan to start the plants even earlier in order to be harvesting well before the summer break.

### **The children said:**

“I like digging. You find worms and woodlice.”

“We dug up the lettuces and gave them to Mrs Platt who washed them and gave them to us for lunch.”



*Mrs Debra Scurrell, with Victoria and Richard harvesting the lettuces.*

