

# EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM BEST SCHOOL GARDEN AWARD REPORTS 2013

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## Entitlements 2013

The following categories can enter two schools:

Large City  
City  
Small City  
Large Town

All other categories Small Village to Town, can enter one school

## Certificates Awarded

Gold 85-100  
Silver Gilt 75-84  
Silver 60-74  
Bronze 50-59  
Certificate of Achievement 0-49

## All Saints C of E Primary School, Sapcote

Dear Mrs. Bakewell and Mr. Watkins,

I enjoyed my visit which I will always remember for the enthusiasm and knowledge shown by Cheyenne, Eleana, Grace, and Ruby. It was very helpful to have the portfolio which showed many of the activities throughout the year.

### **1 GARDENING ACTIVITIES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

Small groups from Years 5 and 6 come out to work with Mr. Watkins. They have five raised beds for fruit, vegetables and herbs of which the children had a very good knowledge. It was also pleasing to see the activities carried out in the Reception area.

### **2 THE GARDEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION AND THE CURRICULUM**

More of the school has involved itself with the school garden, especially Year 5 while carrying out their study of micro-organisms. It was good to see Year 2's work and how much the reception children use their garden in much their work too.

'A Big Green Adventure' involved a lot of children and for Mr Watkins' gardeners to do an assembly at another school was a great achievement.

### **3 VALUE IN SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE**

There were several homes for animals, a log pile and bird boxes. I liked the wormery that was operating well with the fluid from it used on the garden. Pleasingly, there were three water butts in use and recycled tyres made into planters. The wild life area was peaceful and had much of interest including bird boxes, insect homes, and leaf and log piles. There is now a bat box on the school building. Children had gone to a lot of effort to sow wild flowers that had failed to germinate. They will be pleased when it is successful next year.

A pond would be a great asset to the garden which might help to involve more outdoor class work.

I'm sure Year 5 and reception children enjoyed their 'Environment Afternoon.'

### **4 GROWING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES AND HEALTHY EATING**

This is a special area with a good range of fruit, vegetables and herbs. An 11+ kg pumpkin was quite an achievement and the onions were looking good. I was pleased to see the greenhouse in use with pupils taking charge during term time and holiday arrangements made for watering etc. They would have enjoyed propagating plants from seeds and cuttings.

Fruit and vegetables are taken home and some are used by the cookery club. The recipes in the portfolio looked very inviting.

### **5 DESIGN, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

I liked to see the school badge planting scheme which is developing well. The picture of the vandalised garden shows how much you have achieved since Christmas.

Plant areas were well maintained and no litter, weeds or graffiti were visible. Some more colourful containers would enhance the garden if holiday arrangements can be made for them.

I liked the idea of displaying produce at the front of school and supporting All Saints Church as well as your local Bloom Group with a photo exhibition.

Tesco tokens and assistance from a local Garden Centre all helps to improve the school garden for the children.

I am pleased to award the garden:

### **SILVER GILT**

**Graham Lamb**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

8<sup>th</sup> July 2013

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
16	15	15	18	14	78

## Blidworth Oaks Primary School

Haywood Avenue, Blidworth, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG21 0RE

Dear Jayne,

Thank you very much to you and your colleagues, Celia and Phil, for showing me round the school garden.

Thank you also for the bulging portfolio you allowed me to take away with me!

Since I visited the school in 2011 there has been significant changes in the quality and use of the garden areas – the process of change was reflected in the award in 2012.

Our criteria for judging are designed to reflect what we think are the activities and objectives that give best sustainable gardening practice associated with maximum of student involvement, curriculum aims, and support for the wild environment.

I make the following comments related to the judging criteria we use for assessment:-

### **1. GARDENING ACTIVITIES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

There is certainly wide ranging use of the gardens by all the classes; the Garden Club – “The Seedlings”- showed a wide range of knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment, they also clearly understood the theory of rotation. Impressive was the depth of information available on planting to harvesting – indispensable! The utilisation of the quad garden is very effective.

### **2. THE GARDEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM**

The school have been involved in a local well dressing – quite a technical task! Good links with “Men in Sheds”. The gardens are clearly utilised in many ways in the curriculum, as the comprehensive portfolio illustrated. Staff have taken professional gardening development courses.

### **3. VALUE IN SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE**

The wild area is excellent. The wild flowers, the bird boxes and feeders, the bug hotel, the hedgehog lair and log piles are all there. Composting developed over the last year will come to fruition at year end, when it will be dug into the beds. The pond has been well set up, with full involvement from the children, and again is an excellent asset, with pond-life and water plants.

Water collection, where possible, of rainwater is essential and is partly operational – with more being pursued. (Water supply from the roof of the Old School House to the allotment area could be put in hand?).

Bug hunts are being pursued and the children knew what they had found! – the giant bug models are fun and well made. The butterfly corner garden was well maintained.

There is an active ECO after-school club.

### **4. GROWING FRUIT / VEGETABLES, HEALTHY EATING**

All years 3 and 4, and where possible 5 and 6, are involved with the allotment, as, of course, are The Seedlings. The allotment is well set up and the plants in the beds are well-kept, and the beds themselves are in good condition and well laid out. Most of the plants are grown from seed in poly-houses – red and white onions/tomatoes/garlic/broad beans/courgettes/marrows/potatoes/lettuce were in the beds when viewed – as were runner-beans, strawberries, radishes etc.

The courtyard beds have been revitalised with new soil and compost, and replanted with arrange of plants and herbs, including shade loving plants.

Cooking, using, where possible, produce including herbs from the garden, is done in class and in the “let’s get cooking” after school club. Produce is also sold to staff to raise funds.

In the courtyard every year 4 and 5 child had planted seeds in pots, too many to count!! The result, as the plants grow, will be a real education for each of them. Foundation also grow fruit and beans in pots and “wellie gardens” (An omission seems to be fruit trees?)

### **5. DESIGN/MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

It is very clear that the whole site is well managed, designed and well maintained – allotment, forest area, courtyard and wildlife area. Shrub planting to enhance the site is good. The wall murals in the style of famous artists are a unique idea.

The forest school link for pre-school children and key stage 2 and 3, (all with “all weather” clothes, ropes and tools,) was impressive. Visits have been made to outside gardens and the school flies the flag of an ECO school.

Under the National Gardens Scheme, gardens open for charity, the school garden opened on 6th July – for which NGS assessors had to be satisfied!!

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:** Excellent school gardens, now established and well utilised.  
Some more work needed on water collection and compost system on going.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

**GOLD**

**Rupert Atkinson**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

**28th June 2013**

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
18	17	18	18	19	90

## Canon Peter Hall C of E Primary School, Immingham

Dear Nick and Caroline,

May I thank you for the very efficient tour of your school gardens – although you had already had many other bloom representatives on inspection!

There are two established garden areas, the ornamental planting in the Quad (with added raised beds for vegetables) and the Foundation class garden. Added to that is an area in the fringing belt of trees, and the brand new raised “allotment beds”

I make the following comments related to our judging criteria:

### **1. Gardening Activities Skills and knowledge:**

Unfortunately the children were pre-occupied with the school “fair day”, although one or two were available to talk to. The gardening club maintain the very attractive and well kept quad garden at lunchtimes, weeding and watering and I understood a group of 7-11 year olds operate after school (perhaps the same group?). I understood that the Quad is very much the students operation, from design, through planting, and of course the maintenance side. The foundation class use their garden exclusively. Half of one of the new raised allotment beds is allocated to each class and they have planted and maintained them since they were developed earlier this year.

### **2. Garden’s Contribution to Education/Curriculum:**

It is clear that the outdoor class areas in the edge of the trees, and in the foundation area, are well used. The “dig for victory” theme to class activities and the planting and growing in the raised beds will have made curriculum contributions – this link will expand as the use of the beds is developed over future years.

### **3. Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife:**

In various locations in the gardens are some bird feeders, bird boxes and log piles, and an insect house. Waste fruit is collected in a bin. One of the raised beds has been used for an experiment into the broadcasting of wild flower seeds. Sunflowers are grown. Next year it is hoped that “home grown” compost will be used. Water collection is currently inadequate and more butts are required. The school has joined Forest Schools and is developing to their ideas. Daffodil bulbs have been planted by most children in the school.

### **4. Growing Fruit/Vegetables and Healthy Eating:**

There are vegetables and low growing fruit in the raised beds; strawberries, tomatoes, beans, potatoes, corn, herbs. Etc. Plans are being developed to use produce in cooking. Food for Fitness ideas are being pursued – generally through the breakfast club.

### **5. Design/Management and Maintenance:**

All the garden areas are well kept and well maintained. The planting in the Quad area is very effective and the raised beds are well designed and constructed.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:**

The garden areas are well thought out. The site would benefit from more bird feeders and bird and bat boxes, and of course home grown compost. Perhaps a pond could be built for wildlife and pond dipping. The creation of an orchard would add more experience of planting, tree maintenance and harvesting of fruit. The layout of a comprehensive garden is established, clearer use in education and the curriculum will develop. Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:

### **SILVER**

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
13	13	12	13	17	68

**Rupert Atkinson**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom  
9<sup>th</sup> July 2013

## Chaucer Junior School, Ilkeston, Derbyshire

Dear Kerry,

it was lovely to meet with you, Derek, and the children at Chaucer and see the school motto Dream, Believe, Achieve modelled by them so successfully.

I make the following comments in line with our judging criteria:

### **Gardening Activities Skills and knowledge**

Kerry you started as a volunteer at the school 9 years ago and have grown the gardening clubs along with the skills and activities at the school over this time. At present each class has a gardening club, totalling 25 throughout the school with a chosen name e.g. rose bud, plant bud etc, which all 96 children are very proud to be part of. The 12 helpers support the yearly 'themes' of gardening activities along with practical fruit and vegetable growing in an established area of the grounds.

The theme this year, working well with year 4 class project, being World War 11 Living from the Land (you have provided a DVD of the project, thank you). Sponsored by Miracle Grow from Jan this year the gardening clubs worked with West Park Council Nursery to set all the seeds needed for the bedding theme. Chaucer was picked out of Derbyshire's 215 entries and went on to win a silver gilt award at Chelsea flower show. EXCELLENT! The children got to experience some 'real time' skills and practices of horticulture in preparation along with planning and designing, not to mention meeting members of the Royal Family and the media interviews.

### **Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum**

The gardens are used to support children with learning difficulties which include ADHD and Downs Syndrome pupils. The practical skills help to calm and focus minds as well as enjoying the quality outdoor space. Year 6 use the garden for literacy and a design project for bird boxes which were then made by parents and children for the gardens. A sunflower competition between all years used maths to measure and compare, along with data collection. Using the product of the wormery for some plants helped to demonstrate the science behind plant growth and soil fertilizer. Children are encouraged by you to observe mini beast and wildlife cycles while gardening. It would be encouraging to see more staff including gardening activities into the curriculum, say in science, maths and art.

### **Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife**

Evidence of bird boxes, feeders, and other wildlife supporting activities, including a wormery! The only one I've seen on my travels around the schools this year. The school has restricted space for wildflower meadows and ponds or for tree planting to encourage more wildlife or observation of the cycles. It is an area of EMiB criteria which could possibly be introduced to the areas which are available at Chaucer.

### **Growing Fruit/Vegetables & Healthy Eating**

The variety and amount of fruit and veg grown here is impressive, making the most of a limited amount of space. The recycling of milk cartons that clearly identify produce is an idea taken from the Eden project and works very well. Clear, laid out beds along with recycled tyres in Olympic colours, last year's theme for the garden, are used for potatoes and strawberries, expanding the growing area and introducing alternative ways of growing produce.

There is a 'Lets Get Cooking Club' at the school who have made courgette cakes and raspberry crumbles etc.

At Harvest Festival produce is sold to generate some income for the following year's seeds and equipment.

### **Design/Management and Maintenance**

The working space spreads itself around a large area within the school perimeter and has expanded and developed over 9 years. Flower tubs, pots and beds go the front and around the school with the main focus being the small allotment area at the back of the school. A small green house donated by Wilkinson has been vandalised, an activity which seems to be a problem in school at times. It makes it a challenge for you to maintain a solid outdoor area to germinate seeds and cuttings, although an outdoor shed does work as an alternative.

The budget is self generated, so cuttings and seed collection are essential to maintain the high standards and achieve the many awards entered for and won!! Some donations from a local garden centre, a recycling shop run by a parent, B and Q and an Army Supplies in Ripley to support this year's WW 11 theme.

**SUMMARY:** All is achieved with excellent management and organisation skills, given the space and limited income available to the young gardeners here. It is very encouraging to see the enthusiasm and work that the pupils demonstrate clearly benefitting by learning practical skills, planning, designing and achieving results with yearly

'themed' gardening projects. I encourage you to integrate your work into the main curriculum, by gaining teaching support, along with funding resources from within the school budget to reinforce and continue the remarkable results achieved. I look forward to seeing next year's theme.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

**SILVER GILT**

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
16	15	17	16	18	82

**Janet Lewis**

School Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

## Draycott Community Primary School, Draycott, Derbyshire

Dear Mrs Knott, Lynda, members of teaching staff, Adrian (school governor) and children,

What a friendly welcome from you on my arrival. Thank you for showing me your fabulous gardens. I understand this plot of land has gradually developed over 20 years starting with hedging and planting of trees.

I make the following comments in line with our judging criteria:

- 1) **Gardening Activities Skills and knowledge.** A lunch time gardening club which all pupils can attend means children get supervised access to this wonderful space in the school grounds. The 10-15 children showing me around were excited and full of knowledge about the plants, vegetables and wildlife. They explained the reasons for their companion planting scheme and the practical elements of maintaining and watering the garden area. The school council invite 2 children from each class to represent them with thoughts, ideas and development proposals for the area.
  
- 2) **Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum.** Gardening skills and knowledge become part of the curriculum in the early years unit where staff encourage potting skills and planting in small raised beds. Science, maths and art class are brought outside into the garden area. Flowers are examined by the children to discover all aspects of its life cycle and make up. Experiments with growing potatoes in bags, or in raised beds, to see which has the best yield and which are easiest to maintain with their watering and weeding requirements. The children use this area for de-stressing and as a reward for good behaviour called 'golden time'.
  
- 3) **Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife.** The pond area has recently been relocated; it is planned to develop this area with more bog planting and wildlife entry/exit sites. Frogs and newts have been observed. Green algae is a challenge at the moment although the children understood the need to leave recently removed algae until all wildlife has left before adding to the compost heap. There is good knowledge from the children on companion planting, wildlife habitat, the need for a bug hotel they made and many other aspects of natural gardening methods. The philosophy 'not to kill anything living' helps to focus on the benefits of all wildlife to the garden.  
 A nearby water collection butt to save water carrying and installing bat boxes are plans for future development. An RSPB bird watch took place in January this year. There are mature native trees; the children were interested in learning about the hazel tree, with a couple of fruit trees to in this area. A willow tunnel planted 2 years ago is being left to grow though may soon need a big prune before it takes over this area, it would be a shame to lose the tunnel!!  
 Some wonderful imaginative models of butterflies hang in the trees coated with sugar water to encourage butterflies into the garden and sustain the low population of bees. A range of fairy models made by younger children were decoratively hanging. Bird boxes donated and made by parents along with bird feeders of various types were also among trees making the garden look attractive, especially to the wildlife.
  
- 4) **Growing Fruit/Vegetables & Healthy Eating.** A mixture of seeds and plugs were used for the vegetable planting with tomato seeds being sown in science lesson. Student involvement and knowledge was very good and some of the produce was used in cookery classes. There are very sturdy raised beds, (materials and workmanship donated by the Rotary Club), with some vegetables growing. There is possible room for expanding the children's skills and knowledge developing the range and variety of vegetables. This would increase the range of produce for healthy eating sessions in the class room.
  
- 5) **Design/Management and Maintenance.** The design of the garden area is evolving well with eager feedback from the children. It is managed and kept well with lots of support from the staff, children and local groups including EMIB village. Adrian, a governor of the school, encouraged the Village Fund to provide materials for hanging baskets particularly at the front of the school. A green house or poly tunnel are planned which would help with outdoor class lessons and bringing on produce making it more available for the children's use. There is an awareness of health and safety issues for children around the pond and within the garden areas in all weathers.

**SUMMARY:** The ecosystem and environment clearly is at the core of the use of the garden area, and it is very encouraging to see the enthusiasm and knowledge that the pupils demonstrate. This garden brings an extra quality to schooling and class time.

**The Wildlife area and environmental effort is excellent.**

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

**SILVER**

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
15	13	15	12	16	71

**Janet Lewis**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom.

**Wednesday July 10<sup>th</sup> 2013**

In addition, on behalf of East Midlands in Bloom we are pleased to award Draycott Community Primary School:

**“BEST SCHOOL GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE 2013”**

Ellis Guilford School, Nottingham

Dear Richard, Geoff, and pupils Helen, Page and Thomas,

Thank you so much for showing me around your gardens and teaching area. It was very nice to meet with you all and see how much you enjoy working in this area.

I make the following comments in line with our judging criteria:

- 1) **Gardening Activities Skills and knowledge.** This area of the college teaches 'Skills for a Working Life' to approximately 50 pupils. It is used for teaching all year round and across the curriculum. Pupils using it to build 'skills for a working life' rotate the class times every other week. This means they get to enjoy a chunk of time in the garden area learning practical "hands on" skills of growing vegetables fruit and maintenance of the area, including crop rotation, and looking after animals e.g. hens, rabbits and wildlife.
- 2) **Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum.** A great teaching environment with purpose built outdoor classroom space for pupils. Science, biology and drama classes also use this area to teach aspects of the curriculum. A student exchange program with Kenya adds to understanding the bigger picture and to the importance of using organic and sustainable practices and skills.
- 3) **Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife.** The pond has crested newts and frogs with grass snakes and hedgehogs in and around the wildflower meadow areas. The wind turbine used to filter the pond pump is somewhat experimental at this stage but demonstrates initiative and good use of outdoor elements in producing small amounts of heat for the insulator and heating equipment. Recycled materials used in toolbox, bench mats and other storage areas demonstrate sustainable skills and thinking habits.

A few neat practices were the chicken house with free roaming hens. This means free range eggs and natural pest control, particularly for slugs! A wire ball filled with dog hair! What a great way to encourage birds to build habitat.

- 4) **Growing Fruit/Vegetables & Healthy Eating.** Poly tunnels full of students seeded produce ready to be planted up into mostly raised beds across the 3 allotment areas, was impressive to see. There is a good use of grown produce by the school kitchens and also some use in cooking class with the pupils. Vegetables are grown and entered into shows, and also sold at local fete sales to bring in some income. The produce is grown ready to be taken home by the pupils at the end of summer term as it is a challenge to keep the area maintained over the holidays with limited staff availability.
- 5) **Design/Management and Maintenance.** The area has developed with the gradual acquiring of allotment space as it became available over a period of time. There was mention of a possible re-organisation of the area making it easier to maintain and manage. Another benefit would be bigger yields with more pupil space and availability. Solid links with Nottingham City Council means possible jobs for some of the pupils and entry into City and Guilds Horticulture programme. Good links also with adjoining local resident allotments encourages an exchange of skills and provides role models for the pupils.

**SUMMARY:** The teaching and development of practical skills for life are well established here with a mini ecosystem and environment clearly at the core of the use of the numerous garden areas. It is very encouraging seeing the enthusiasm and work that the pupils demonstrate clearly and the positive effect on their learning. There may be a possible re-organisation of the curriculum along with two posts developing into teaching positions. With an outstanding Ofsted report the challenge will be to maintain the position for another year.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

**GOLD**

Janet Lewis

School Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
18	18	18	18	18	90

Elliston Primary and Nursery School, Cleethorpes

Dear Dena and Dianne,

Thank you for showing me round your unique roof and quad gardens. It was a pleasure to see so much colour and endeavour! I know that you realise that it is very early days after getting the roof garden started but you are getting very good results in quality and involvement.

I make the following comments in line with our judging criteria:

- 1) **Gardening Activities, Skills and knowledge:** It is clear that the Golden Time on Fridays is very well utilised by students to work on many aspects of the roof garden; planting seeds and then transplanting, watering, dead-heading and nurturing. Because of the size and location of the garden only 6 can take part at a time but opportunities are rotated. Key stage 1 and 2 are also involved.  
The children's representatives, Ellie and Lauren clearly knew their plants.  
Nursery children water their own garden and play there extensively.  
The quad garden is maintained but the intention is to develop the use and the planting.
- 2) **Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum:** It is of course early days and inevitably it was a little unclear how much the garden is used to help meet curriculum subjects, but activity is considerable and photos by children are used in reports. Children have been active in looking at designs for the lower quad garden.
- 3) **Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife:** There are two rabbits in the roof garden that benefit from cut leaves, diverted from compost! There has also been grass seed grown to help their habitat. Sunflowers have been grown and there are two bird boxes on the roof garden wall. Other butterfly bushes were observed. Composting is in its infancy but there are plans to move the composting bin to the roof. There is a water butt, very new, and undoubtedly the site would benefit from a few more to be self sustainable.
- 4) **Growing Fruit/Vegetables & Healthy Eating:** Among other veg/fruit, herbs, tomatoes, strawberries, cabbage, onions, beans and lettuce are being grown in pots of various sizes. Herbs have been grown and sold, and potatoes grown, harvested, weighed and cleaned!  
Potatoes and herbs have been cooked in the local church community room, herbs have been sold to raise money, and lettuces have found a natural outlet in Bubble and Squeak (the rabbits!).
- 5) **Design/Management and Maintenance:** The site of the school is very restricted and space for gardening very small. However, in a remarkably short time, and with real commitment the roof garden has been developed. As the area fills up with more and more pots and plants, the roof site is very colourful and adds to the ambience of the school. This is all a real achievement.  
Funding has come from the activities of organisers and children in cake and plant sales and other initiatives.  
The garden area with a seas and coast theme is a nice touch.

**SUMMARY:** This is a very small school site; the roof garden concept, and the small plot in the quad, are the only possibilities for active gardening in the main school. Much has been achieved and much learnt and plans for both areas are developing, although clearly it is early days.

The site could do with more and better bird and bat boxes; some raised beds, particularly in the quad area; better water collection and composting; and a structured approach to linking the gardens to the curriculum – to everyone's benefit. Perhaps container planting could enhance the entrance areas of the school.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

**BRONZE**

Rupert Atkinson

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2013

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
13	8	8	12	15	56

## Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School, Northampton

Dear Mrs Robinson,

It was good to be able to visit your school again. I was disappointed to learn that Mrs Walker has been on long term sickness since last year but pleased that the garden was still being put to good use.

### **1. GARDENING ACTIVITIES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

Children from all year groups and the Reception class have some involvement with the school garden. Reception children have their own raised bed and a bird feeding station. There are eight raised beds and a wide range of plants are grown.

Mrs Walker was involved with the gardening club so this hasn't been meeting this year but the school has a group of children who meet at lunch times and are known as the 'Green Finger' children.

No children were available when I visited.

### **2. THE GARDEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE CURRICULUM**

The garden, particularly the wildlife area, is normally used by many subject areas. Maths use the lake for pond dipping and it is used for creative writing and drama. Year 6 have made bird boxes which have been sold or taken home. RE make use of the willow structure which is used for prayers. Science use the garden for germination experiments. Alongside a perimeter fence pupils from one year group have each planted a Sunflower that will be measured to find the tallest.

### **3. VALUE IN SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE**

The school has an excellent area of woodland with a lake that has a dipping platform. There are bird boxes and feeding stations and a hide which classes can use for observation. Unfortunately the area was out of use when I visited because a large 'Norway Maple' was considered dangerous and is to be felled.

The school has many native trees as well as plants to attract butterflies and bees such as buddleia and lavender.

There are several compost bins including one for fruit waste. Each classroom re-cycles paper. There are water butts but they were waiting to be connected to receive rain water.

I liked the Bird Boxes and Re-cycling corridor displays.

### **4. GROWING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES AND HEALTHY EATING**

Fruit and Veg. is used by the school kitchen and children are encouraged to eat healthily but I'm sure a cookery club would be popular.

Good use is made of a greenhouse. There are courgettes, onions, tomatoes, lettuce, cabbage and beetroot, as well as raspberries, blackcurrants and a plum tree. There were a few herbs including mint and chives.

### **5. DESIGN, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

The garden was well laid out with plenty of colour and variety. However, it would have been helpful to have seen photographs of some of the activities that have taken place during the year. In the future the 'Secret Garden' woodland area is to be offered to other school groups for their use.

The school is fortunate in having a gardener for 6-8 hours each week as well as the 'Green Finger' children who help to keep the grounds clean and to water plants.

Following my assessment I am pleased to award the garden:

### **SILVER**

**Graham Lamb**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

26<sup>th</sup> June 2013

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>60</b>

## Greenfields Community School, The Meadows, Nottingham.

Dear Jane,

Thank you Jane, the students, and Mr Smith for showing me around your garden area and the marvellous gardens you have created both outside and within the class room, creating a special learning environment.

### **1) GARDENING ACTIVITIES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE:**

Jane you come into school one day a week to garden. 6 children from each class take it in turns throughout the day. They have one bed per class and they learn crop rotation. The children demonstrated knowledge of this, companion planting and organic sprays to kill black fly on the crops.

### **2) GARDEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION/CURRICULUM:**

The gardens are used as an outdoor learning environment with a shed for potting up and a greenhouse/conservatory area. Forest School learn plant names and identification, bug hunts and habitats, wild life cycles, making fires and practical survival skills. Design and technology use objects found in the garden for art. Recognition for the need of creating a new post and a new member of staff whose focus will be on bringing outdoor learning into the curriculum, to best make use of this exciting developing environment.

### **3) VALUE IN SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE:**

Lots of composting with big bins!! School kitchen uses them and leaves are collected for compost as well. Bird feeders, boxes, and bat boxes a recent addition. The Arkwright Meadows Gardens pond is adjacent to the Greenfields site and visits are made to it – many frogs heard and seen! A teacher trained also in Forest skills teaches use of knife, fire building, and survival skills in the woods. Science of habitats, environment, and sustainability along with maths, social skills and problem solving are also part of the wildlife curriculum. Each class took part in planting areas of wildlife in February, planting bulbs, and hedging.

### **4) GROWING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES – HEALTHY EATING:**

There is a newly planted area of apple trees and a soft fruit outside the raised bed area. A wide range of vegetables and some fruit and herbs grown in the raised beds. Each class experimenting with a new variety of potato bought from Heritage organic potatoes. Onions left to seed for experimental purpose also demonstrated watering and environmental conditions needed for healthy growth.

Produce is cooked by staff in the kitchen contributing to school meals. Students also get to cook produce in the "Food for Life" programme which means swapping cooking and gardening lessons. There is a good level of student knowledge and involvement with how and what to make with potatoes and fruit.

### **5) DESIGN / MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE:**

Excellent maintenance to the wildflower area with Countrywide contractors who mow pathways through for pupils to explore. Newly planted native whips are high maintenance at the moment requiring watering and protection from wildlife, lawn mowers and strimmers!! Hanging baskets were made by class 6 for the school.

The nursery children learn environmental skills and water collection as well as growing some excellent fruit and vegetables in the raised beds. Children in the nursery clearly enjoy getting their hands into the compost with no problem!!

There are plans to develop a damp gardening area. The use of under planting and lots of mulch helps towards maintenance.

Support links with Forest Schools, Garden Organic, Woodland Trust, and Food for Life – as well as links with Arkwright Community Garden next door.

### **SUMMARY:**

This is an exciting garden and very enjoyable to visit; especially notable were the high levels of pupil involvement, the outdoor teaching skills, and teaching staff reacting so positively to the pupils' enthusiasm. In summary, the environment of the school has clearly been enhanced by the forward thinking of head and staff.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

### **GOLD**

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
18	19	19	19	18	93

**Janet Lewis**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom  
11<sup>th</sup> July 2013

**ON BEHALF OF EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM, WE ARE PLEASED TO AWARD GREENFIELDS COMMUNITY SCHOOL THE AWARD OF:**

**"BEST SCHOOL GARDEN 2013."**

## Krishna Avanti Primary School, Evington, Leicester

Dear Mr Knox,

We all enjoyed looking round this new school which has already achieved a great deal towards developing a garden that is proving to be a valuable resource for the children. The school which currently has Reception and Year 1 classes is open to all cultures but has a predominantly Hindu ethos.

### **1 GARDENING ACTIVITIES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

The garden has six raised beds which are used by children from both years. A weekend club has been set up for children and parents to help in the garden. The reception children have enjoyed bug hunts and produced some interesting paintings. I am sure that making stone soup was fun.

### **2 THE GARDEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION AND THE CURRICULUM**

Children have planted bulbs outside and have expressed an interest in creating a den. This could assist as an outdoor classroom for story time and other activities.

The children have used beans to measure growth and they have produced an information book about plants and made plant labels. Some children have brought plants into school to look after.

### **3 VALUE IN SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE**

Some native plants have been put in as part of the Jubilee celebrations and wildflower seeds have been sown. There are plants to attract bees and butterflies.

Each class has a bin for recycling and a large water butt has been purchased but now needs connecting.

At the moment there are no bird feeders or bird or bat boxes but there is a log pile that could encourage hedgehogs.

### **4 GROWING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES AND HEALTHY EATING**

Children have sown seeds both outside and in the classroom. The outside raised beds contained potatoes, broad beans, sweet corn, tomatoes and strawberries. There were also some mint and chives as well as smell and feel plants. There is a snack area to encourage healthy eating. Children had made chips but with the increased use of the raised beds and growing more fruit, this vegetarian school may like to use more produce to show how food is prepared for eating.

### **5 DESIGN, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

The garden has a few weeds but is generally well designed, very clean and tidy with good access for all. There are plans for a flower garden.

The school has lots of potential and has made a very good start to create its school garden. With only a little further progress the school will be able to attain bronze standard.

Following our assessment we are pleased to award the garden:

### **CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT**

**Graham Lamb**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

25th June 2013

## Lincolnshire Montessori School, Caistor

Dear Vicki and Nathan,

May I thank you and all the children for showing me round your garden, and illustrating your activities.

You have a large site with several acres of land, including the garden area next to the school.

I make the following comments related to the judging criteria we use for assessment:

- 1) **Gardening Activities Skills and knowledge:** The visit was centred round the 4-6 years class and the garden adjacent to their teaching area. (Other classes do get involved but clearly on a smaller scale,)  
The class actively use the garden area whenever possible and have been involved in sowing seeds transplanted into beds etc. They are aware and knowledgeable about the varied activities they do, and an ex-farmer helps as advisor. Pupils are very enthusiastic and they freely dig, plant, produce compost and water. They tend and dig up vegetables and there is a good raised bed of herbs, recently planted. They have also planted a small shrub bed.  
A holiday club and an after school Nature Club operates every week.
- 2) **Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum:** The 4-6 age group class clearly use the garden area as a classroom, and relate their experiences there to maths and language and other curriculum based activities. There can be no doubt that this class uses the garden effectively, although it was not clear how much other classes put the gardens to similar use.
- 3) **Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife:** Although the garden area does not have a pond, the adjacent fields have a stream which the children visit on wildlife walks. There is no project within the garden area for growing wild flowers – although again an area of field is left uncut as a wild area.  
There are no bird or bat boxes, or feeders, although there is an insect house and water collection has started from a water butt.  
Composting is more advanced – 2 bins and an open container; the compost is of good quality.  
Horse manure is also used. Classes are involved in Eco Schools and have already gained a bronze rating.  
There is a Wildlife Club which is very active.  
Hens and guinea-pigs are kept on site.
- 4) **Growing Fruit/Vegetables & Healthy Eating:** Because of the depredations of rabbits, only a limited range of root vegetables can be grown in the small beds – potatoes and onions; although courgettes, pumpkins, strawberries, rhubarb and tomatoes are also grown from seed.  
The potatoes are “chitted” before planting. Cookery is actively pursued by the class, with bread, scones and pizzas regularly prepared and cooked in an oven and a bread maker!  
Herbs are grown and incorporated in these items.  
The school kitchen uses herbs and produce from the garden, (and illicitly onions on occasion!).
- 5) **Design/Management and Maintenance.** It is early days still in the development of the garden and the centre is the 4-6 year class. Activities, structures, areas are being added – a camera to view inside a bird box has been acquired; a new green roofed structure will be constructed soon.  
There are links to Lincs Wildlife Trust and they are members of Eco-schools.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:** It is very clear that wildlife, nature and environmental issues are actively pursued – although evidence in the garden is limited. It would have been good to see evidence of gardening by other classes. We always suggest the use of raised beds to maximise root environment, and the teaching of simple plant “rotation” for disease and nutrient control.

The bird box camera and the green roof building will also be useful assets.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

### **SILVER**

**Rupert Atkinson**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

9<sup>th</sup> July 2013

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
14	12	14	13	12	65

## Lyncrest Primary School, Northampton

Dear Mrs O'Neill,

It was a pleasure to be shown around your school by yourself, Mrs Steel and so many happy and well informed children. Your excellent portfolio has been a great help to see what has happened during the rest of the year.

### **1. GARDENING ACTIVITIES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

All 254 children have some involvement with the school garden and have their own area next to their classroom. There are after-school workshops and many help one of the parent volunteers at lunch time. There are 3 raised beds for vegetable growing which could be used to help teach the principles of rotation. The children were able to name the plants grown in them as well as most of the plants found around the school. There are a good variety of both annual and perennial plants grown.

### **2 THE GARDEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION AND THE CURRICULUM**

This school garden has a peace garden with a well-used willow structure which has been used for many lessons. Children can relax, read and learn their sounds.

Use is made of the garden to help with maths, art and science studying such things as the life cycles of frogs and butterflies, parts of a plant and food chains. The school is involved in the 'Great Elm Project' and Year 3 have their own wormery to study the importance of worms.

### **3 VALUE IN SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE**

There is a very pleasant pond area with a few pond plants and a solar powered fountain.

There are plants to touch, smell and to attract bees and butterflies.

It would be good to plant some more native trees but the school has encountered permission problems when they have wanted to do this.

The school has bird feeders, bird and bat boxes, and homes for insects and hedgehogs. Bird boxes have been made from kits by the children and their families and one of the bird boxes has had baby Blue Tits.

The school recycles, collects rain water, composts and grows clover as a green manure.

### **4 GROWING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES AND HEALTHY EATING**

Last year the school gained the 'Enhanced Healthy Schools Award'

There are several vegetables and fruit grown and Years 5 and 6 have grown heritage varieties of carrots to see which tastes the best. There are also a few herbs.

I'm sure the children enjoyed making and tasting the soup they have made in the past and no doubt would like a cookery club to further encourage their healthy eating.

Produce has been used by the school kitchens.

### **5 DESIGN, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

The garden is well laid out and maintained. Access is good and the area is well used, clean and mostly free of weeds.

The school is very fortunate to have volunteers who put in a great deal of time to support the garden, particularly Mrs Steel who has been largely responsible for organising the school's outdoor learning.

A parent runs an annual working party in the grounds and has raised £500 sponsorship from Barclaycard. Other sponsorship includes a local company that gives advice and has donated many items for the garden, and help has been received from Morrison's and Aldi.

Next year the school wishes to increase its wildlife area and diversity.

Following my assessment I am pleased to award the garden:

### **SILVER GILT**

**Graham Lamb**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

26<sup>th</sup> June 2013

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
15	17	15	13	15	75

Middleton Primary School, Middleton-by-Wirksworth, Derbyshire

Dear Mike, Mrs Williams and Mrs Bowle,

Thank you very much for spending time with me, going round the school gardens, the wildlife area and the off-site allotment area. And thanks also to the children who showed me round.

I make the following comments in line with our judging criteria:

- 1) **Gardening Activities Skills and knowledge:** The Gardening club meets Thursday afternoon after school and classes have regular opportunity to spend time creatively in the woodland area. There are clearly a lot of opportunities for hands on involvement. You have raised beds for fruit/vegetables and annuals and perennials can be seen on the site. Plants have been grown from seed.
- 2) **Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum:** The woodland area and other areas of the gardens are used in numeracy, art, and literacy. There are hens being looked after by the children.
- 3) **Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife:** The ornamental garden (next door to the very fine lower classroom), built with the help of parents, is very attractive. It has bird boxes (and a bee box!), buddleias, and clearly draws children into the outdoor environment. You have a very fine meadow area planted successfully with wild flowers. Butterflies were being released into the woodland area. Sunflowers are being grown and there is regular bird-watching. The woodland area was clearly well used for investigations and play, with woodpiles. It was a rare delight to see slow-worms in the allotment area. It would be good to see more bird boxes and bat boxes.
- 4) **Growing Fruit/Vegetables & Healthy Eating:** There are fruit trees which the children helped plant. Separate from the school, but only a short walk away is an allotment area. Some composting is carried out, and there is water storage there but no efficient water collection on the site – perhaps a small shed with a sloping roof and a water butt would be very effective. I noted potatoes, butternut squash, cucumbers, rhubarb, herbs, courgettes, shallots and raspberries being grown in various areas of the school. Some produce is taken home, sold to parents, or made into soup or chutney.
- 5) **Design/Management and Maintenance:** The reflective garden by the classroom is excellent. The wildflower area appears a real success - few schools (or anyone else for that matter!) make a success of these areas. The woodland area is a great resource for adventure and finding wildlife. The allotment could do with more concentrated work to bring it back into a real order, but from the portfolio from previous years the early part of the year has not been kind to its use. Generally the site is very well kept through the year.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:** There were many illustrations during the tour that all the garden areas are visited and utilised for the enjoyment and education of the children. There is a wide range of gardening environments and enthusiasm for them all.

Perhaps the allotment area should have a better water supply and plant knowledge of the children could be better and links to curriculum more developed.

I'm sure the wildlife area will continue to be developed as even more of an outside classroom.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

**SILVER**

**Rupert Atkinson**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

Thursday 4th July 2013

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
15	12	15	15	15	72

## Northgate School Arts College, Northampton

Dear Mr Negus,

I was very pleased to visit your garden and meet some of your special needs students who clearly enjoyed the work they do with you. You achieve a lot in a very large and diverse area.

### **1. GARDENING ACTIVITIES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

The students I talked to were able to tell me about their work and had a good knowledge of the plants they had grown and understood why crops are rotated.

They have eight raised beds which allows them to have involvement in growing fruit and vegetables as far as they are able.

The students have the opportunity to try grafting and taking both hard and soft wood cuttings.

### **2. THE GARDEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION AND THE CURRICULUM**

A large poly tunnel was available as an outside classroom and was well used by the gardening groups and could prove very useful for all students in a wide range of curriculum subjects. It was good to involve students when buying to help their maths.

### **3. VALUE IN SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE**

There are bird feeders and boxes, log piles and a bug hotel to encourage wildlife. The Woodland Trust has supplied native trees and a woodland area is being developed.

Water is collected from the poly tunnel which has a self-watering tray. There are several areas for composting.

The college does not have a pond but some pond plants are being grown in a container.

Wild flowers are grown in a border and a container and there are plants for touching, smelling and encouraging bees and butterflies.

Used tyres are also used as containers.

### **4. GROWING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES AND HEALTHY EATING**

Students choose what they would like to grow and there is a wide range of fruit and vegetables grown. e.g. broad beans, potatoes, parsnips, peas, brassicas, lettuce, tomatoes and radish. Fruit includes redcurrant, gooseberry, raspberry, strawberry, blackcurrant, plum, pear and apple. It is planned so that the majority can be harvested before the end of July.

The crops are grown for the Domestic Science department where the students have the opportunity to use them and some are taken home.

There are several herbs grown around the college.

### **5. DESIGN, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

The grounds are clean, free of litter and kept tidy but it must be very difficult to maintain the garden areas with your teaching commitment and small amount of help that you have.

Wheelchairs cannot be taken across the grass so a local Rotary group have put in a wheelchair path to access the allotment. Wheelchair users do have a very high bed in a courtyard to grow vegetables.

The school's Tom Thumb lettuces were chosen to be exhibited at the Chelsea Flower Show.

Supermarket vouchers are collected to help with purchases and a local Garden Centre allows the college to buy its compost at half price. The caretaker carries out any necessary holiday maintenance

My best wishes for a well earned retirement

Following my assessment I am pleased to award the garden:

### **SILVER**

**Graham Lamb**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

26<sup>th</sup> June 2013

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
11	7	13	16	15	62

Ridgeway Infant School, Littleover, Derby

Dear Mrs Patel and children,

Thank you so much for showing me round with such enthusiasm, I did enjoy being shown around your developing and colourful school gardens.

I make the following comments in line with our judging criteria:

**1) Gardening Activities Skills and knowledge:**

The entry into the Bloom competition increased the gardening activities for the gardening groups and for the "drop in" sessions which are run as part of the curriculum and gave them an objective to work toward. The children took delight in showing me their Project Book with pictures of the activities they had taken part in over the growing season, from harvest festival to the entry into Bloom. This book demonstrated their knowledge of plants and the various tasks they had undertaken to produce the wonderful display of colour at the entrance, along the fencing and in the outdoor planters.

**2) Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum:**

A pretty flower bed outside in the playing area had been a project in which each class designed their own bed. The designs were then voted on and planted up by the winning class, an excellent idea. This year's school topic has been on 'edibles'. A tunnel of life was being built while I toured the gardens, developing the subject of transition and changes in life. I wonder if this could be part of the gardening curriculum including eco and life cycles for the children in the butterfly topic planned for next year.

**3) Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife:**

While outside, the gardening club children showed me how they look to find materials from the trees and other vegetation to pack the bug hotel; they had great fun with this idea. Bird boxes and feeders, made by them, were all around the larger area of garden. There is a wildlife area in its early stages of development, designed and planned by a Forestry Tutor from Derby College. This area had recently been planted with native trees and grasses. Parents have taken part in moving fencing marking out the boundary of the newly created wild life area.

**4) Growing Fruit/Vegetables Healthy Eating:**

Assortments of vegetables were being grown in this area of the garden in raised beds. The children identified the different vegetables and flowers. The children took part in taster sessions with some of the vegetables and others were taken home.

**5) Design/Management and Maintenance:**

The gardens did seem a little dispersed around the school grounds, but it is early days with new interests and the evolving idea for the staff of the potential influence gardening has for developing learning skills and increasing positive social behaviour. Support from Derby College Tutor and pupils have advanced the wildlife area including a natural clay pond with bog plants and fencing. This area is worked on Sundays when the children are not there, so sadly they are missing out on participating in the development.

**SUMMARY:** The ecosystem and environment clearly is an important consideration in the use of the new garden area. It is very encouraging to see the enthusiasm and work that the pupils demonstrated with the bug hotel and garden design competition. A maintenance and management plan which will include all the areas of interest and bring them together into consistent and supported use by the pupils will be the challenge. Inclusion of this into the curriculum, maths, science, biodiversity, along with art and design will help to develop the wider and transferable skills used in gardening for pupils; at the same time as making the grounds more cohesive and enjoyable.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

**SILVER**

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
16	12	12	10	12	62

**Janet Lewis**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2013

## Ridgeway Primary School, Ridgeway, North Derbyshire

Dear Janet, and Gardening Group,

May I thank you once again for allowing me the privilege of visiting the garden and to talk with you and the children. This year, despite the weather earlier in the year, the garden never looked better.

As usual you will find below, against each of our judging criteria, comments that I hope will do the garden justice and help encourage you all for the future.

- 1) **Gardening Activities Skills and knowledge:** The Green Gangs involvement in the garden, on a weekly basis, and their clear knowledge and interest, stands out. All the classes have some involvement in planting and enjoying all the garden has to give. The raised individual beds really work to give each class a clear patch of their own. It was good to find students who had an understanding of rotation.
- 2) **Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum:** Clearly this is an area that is often used as an outdoor classroom. In the allotment record it is clear what has been planted by each class and the cross curriculum activities covered, from mini-beast hunts, through literacy, art and design, drawing, bird watching, science, maths/measuring, geography/plant recognition, experiment in biodegrading, health and safety, ground preparation and fertilisation, area, weighing and measuring, PSCH etc.  
**The project in designing a plant climbing framework, picking a winning design, construction and then placing art work plasticine model animals on the spikes is quite excellent.**
- 3) **Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife:** Native wild plant area, birdfeeders, bird-boxes, log piles, stone piles, insect homes. Water collection and watering. Tree planting, Sunflowers. Blue tits nested in a bird box and were observed.  
**Very impressive is the compost quality! And even more impressive the experiment to compare growth using proprietary fertiliser on one bed and home-made compost on another – very good indeed.**
- 4) **Growing Fruit/Vegetables & Healthy Eating:** Clear student involvement from all classes; knowledge very good. Food is taken home to eat (in the absence of cooking facilities.). Herbs are grown including mint, thyme, lavender. Soft fruit grown. A number of fruit trees, apples, pears, cherries, Victoria plums. Where possible plants brought on from seed.  
Grown: Strawberries, raspberries, blackcurrants, potatoes, carrots, lettuce, broccoli, runner and broad beans, tomatoes, peas and onions.
- 5) **Design/Management and Maintenance.** Well managed, well maintained. Well used. Well laid out – on a very tight site! Every space utilised. Equipment very good – all from Morrison's.  
Good secure shed. Daffodils adorn the site in spring.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

The garden is fully utilised, wherever possible, in positive useful projects – not just in growing plants. It is almost impossible to think what more could be done with the space.

(If you get a bit of land next door, maybe a pond?)

**In addition:** Children grew and sold daffodils in support of Marie Curie Nurses.

**Edward G. In year 6, one of the green gang members has won through to the National Semi-final of the RHS Schools scheme Young Gardener of the Year, (and has already won a video camera for the school!) – Congratulations!**

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

### GOLD

**Rupert Atkinson**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

4<sup>th</sup> July 2013

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
17	17	18	17	16	85

In addition:

**ON BEHALF OF EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM, WE ARE PLEASED TO AWARD RIDGEWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL:**

**“BEST SCHOOL FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GARDEN 2013.”**

**Rupert Atkinson**

**For East Midlands in Bloom**

## Robert Bakewell School, Loughborough

Dear Mr Simmons,

May I thank you, Gina and the children for showing me around your school gardens with such enthusiasm and interest.

I make the following comments in line with our judging criteria:

- 1) **Gardening Activities Skills and knowledge.** There are two clubs which meet weekly after school with the support of yourself, parents and volunteers involving approximately 20 children. The allotment area is well defined and laid out with each class having a separate plot marked by class number and a piece of art made from recycled materials. Some plots are also used to teach special needs children within the school. This area would benefit from investing in raised beds; the greenhouse needs a little maintenance and then could be utilised more by the children for seed germination as part of the curriculum. The children were very enthusiastic and interested in working in the allotment area; they could identify produce, trees, wildlife and pest and diseases throughout the range of planting areas within the school.
  
- 2) **Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum.** Inside the school every classroom wall had drawings, collages, and projects on the value of plants, insects, wildlife and the contribution to the eco system. It was encouraging to see a recent photograph competition on plant and wildlife pictures; pupils work on tree pests and larvae also on display.
  
- 3) **Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife.** The pupils have clearly gained great interest and knowledge from the ecosystem. The school grounds are all geared towards supporting wildlife and the environment in a natural relaxed way. Observation of the health of all plants, trees in particular and the association with wildlife and insects population, linking their habitats and lifecycles into the bigger picture of the benefits of locally grown foods and seed harvesting comparing this to the amount of food miles from bought produce. A camcorder in a nesting box last year showed a blue tit nesting and rearing. This was a focal point in reception for all to watch. Sadly there are no birds this year due to squirrel and woodpecker activity around the nesting box. Evidence of water collection from the roof of the outdoor class room next to the allotment area, children understood composting and organic practice as support for the environment. There are log piles around the grounds, an insect home made with the help of children in the pond and a wildlife area. There is a tree trail which is used by children within the curriculum and garden clubs. A wooden post next to each tree species, demonstrating the leaf shape, disease and its wildlife contribution. The children are learning the 18 species of trees within the grounds by name. It did seem that that the children had a lot of interest and understanding how all of the gardens contributed to the eco system although this presented a real challenge to organise efficient management and maintenance to the two small groups of garden clubs.
  
- 4) **Growing Fruit/Vegetables & Healthy Eating.** The allotment plots were small though a good range of vegetables and fruit were grown and the children enjoyed talking about them and the caterpillars/pigeons which ate the cabbages! Produce from the allotments were not allowed into the school kitchen although children cooked soup in class and sold the other produce to parents raising money for funds. The children were aware of the benefits of eating home grown or locally produced vegetables and fruits comparing this to supermarket produce which is flown into the UK as well as the benefits growing organically without pesticides particularly its contribution to wildlife. Some work on natural pest control may be introduced into the growing of foods widening the children's practical knowledge of keeping vegetables and fruit for themselves not just the pests. The introduction of raised beds would be of benefit for this too.
  
- 5) **Design/Management and Maintenance.** The design of each garden area within the extensive grounds of the school are well laid out, free of litter and graffiti. The different areas of garden are spread out across the school grounds though linked together with a well thought out tree trail detailing the name of the tree, leaf shape and wildlife attraction. The sensory garden has to be moderated by adults due to its location outside the school gates and across the entrance/exit road to the school, as well as the pond area which is kept padlocked due to health and safety of the children. The management and maintenance of the sensory garden area is a challenge due to

the increasing amount of horse tail weed in and among the mature planting. The small pond in the wildlife area would benefit from some bog plants and maybe a dedicated area for small animals to get in and out. A school governor and member of the local Transition group encouraged community involvement with some children and staff forming part of a Community Orchard planting project between them and University Students.

There are plans to develop areas around the school, with more wildflowers and replacing shrubs for more wildlife friendly planting scheme.

Planters at the entrance to the school have been paid for by the PSA Association and provide a lovely show of colour.

**SUMMARY:** The ecosystem and environment clearly is at the core of the use of the numerous garden areas, and it is very encouraging to see the enthusiasm and work that the pupils demonstrate, but maintenance and a management plan which brings all aspects of the gardens together and into consistent and supported use will be the challenge.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

### **SILVER**

**Janet Lewis**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013**

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
11	12	12	10	15	60

## Rosliston C of E Primary School, South Derbyshire

Dear Liz, Stephanie and children,

Thank you for showing me your garden and plans for the exciting development of a new plot of land next to your school playground.

I make the following comments in line with our judging criteria:

- 1) **Gardening Activities Skills and Knowledge:** An impressive development of raised beds in a small area next door to the school playground, constructed with the help of a local building contractor. Lots of excitement and enthusiasm from the children's gardening club and eco club. A good foundation of skills starting with seed germination in the green house, potting up into the superb raised beds which are in use for the second year. The children demonstrated good knowledge of the produce growing using prompt cards to show me what they had achieved and when to sow and pick the vegetables and herbs grown. The local community encouraged the local council to obtain the vacant plot and building next door and give it to the school!
  
- 2) **Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum:** Each member of the eco group has a job e.g. watering the potted flowers and herbs around the school or collecting recyclable items into the bins. A 'save the endangered animals' project across all ages is helping the children to see the bigger picture of wildlife and eco systems. It is encouraging to hear that the sale of produce last year encouraged the use of addition and subtraction skills in the math lessons. Plans to enter Chapman's Nurseries (a local garden centre) Show will help to keep the interest going. Good use of RHS School gardening criteria has achieved the school levels 2 and 3 already and are being used in the planning, design and development of the school garden. Use of pollard cherry tree branches from the village have been made into an "eco- man" demonstrating lots of creative ideas and the recycling of materials. The printed brochure demonstrated the development of the area and the use by staff and volunteers of the RHS gardening scheme which outlined the personal, mental, physical and social values children achieve from being involved with gardening.
  
- 3) **Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife:** A lot of understanding of wildlife has come from the new plot next door to the school; there was involvement with an ecologist on resident bats, before the building could be removed. This has taught the children about the life cycles of bats and the habitat needed to safeguard them even though it delayed plans! Two new bat homes have been placed around the plot, along with the existing bird box and camcorder which allow the tits in the nest to be seen on screens around the school. A lovely big bug hotel made by the children will probably need resiting as the plans develop. The portfolio says this was used for science and art lessons last year including a bug hunt in the school grounds. There is a water collection butt used by the eco club for watering containers around the school and paid for by Morrison's vouchers, excellent! Plans to introduce an effective watering system are outlined in the portfolio; some composting of waste and weeds is evident in the raised beds area.
  
- 4) **Growing Fruit/Vegetables & Healthy Eating:** The children do make soup in the kitchen with bought produce as there is not enough grown at the moment and school meals are already brought in from outside. Maybe a scaled-down cooking lesson could be started for each class using some home grown produce for experimenting with your lovely variety of herbs, stuffed cabbage leaves with fennel or even a small taster lesson on tea infusion with the lemon balm! Soft fruit from trees and strawberries are eaten with more to come next year from a variety of newly planted canes. Understanding of crop rotation and growing cycles with potatoes varieties and surprise early potatoes from last year, along with a stray cucumber plant, all added to the excitement of nature doing its own thing! The existing pear tree needed some tlc as pear production this year was effected by a bug infestation.
  
- 5) **Design/Management and Maintenance.** Now you have an empty plot of land the sky's the limit but I imagine this can seem quite daunting too. It's early days to draw up plans as present and future needs have to be clearly agreed by consultation with relevant bodies to prioritise needs and make the most of this area

of land. The staff and school gardening clubs have made a great job of the existing areas of the school and the newly developed extended area of raised beds with a small green house. I understand they are to make recommendations to the school committees on how they would like to develop the new plot. They have already taken on the new grass verge of the property, planting it for wildlife interest and also joining in with the local village bloom entry.

Stephanie (school governor and grandmother of some of the gardening group pupils) gave me a well designed and produced brochure showing last year's growing period, community support in partitioning for this plot of land, and future development plans. Some of the plans include practical aspects of watering the gardens, plus designing a sensory garden, introducing more RHS criteria for school gardening activities e.g. kitchen garden planner, and more planting to encourage wildlife along the newly acquired grass verge.

**SUMMARY:** It is still early days but I feel you have a very resourceful approach which is very much geared to the local community, having already gained support from local timber and garden centres for plants and design ideas. This approach is also illustrated in the utilisation of the school Council to raise funds and provide mushroom designed litter bins, and the petitioning of the Derbyshire council to contribute the fabulous additional ground which almost doubles your school garden footprint.

I have no doubt you will make the utmost use of this land to enhance the school and pupils gardening activities while at the school. I look forward to seeing how they have developed and pupils benefitted from their experience next year.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

#### **BRONZE**

**Janet Lewis**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

**Monday 3rd July 2013**

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
9	10	15	9	11	54

Sherard Primary School, Melton Mowbray

Dear Vicki,

Thank you very much for showing me round your new school garden, which you started developing in 2012, and thanks also to Julia, John and Tina who kindly contributed to my understanding of the school and the garden. You have already made much progress in a short period and despite it being early days, you have reached an excellent basis for future development, despite the unhelpful weather (at the time of judging!)

I make the following comments related to the judging criteria we use for assessment.

- 1) **Gardening Activities Skills and knowledge:** The establishment of the Ground-Force Club, with such enthusiastic members, which generally meets on a Wednesday afternoon, is excellent; as are the visits to the gardens by all the classes. You have excellent raised beds which have been designed to meet the needs of all children in the school. General planting has started but it is early days and children's plant knowledge and recognition will follow.
- 2) **Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum:** The basis of a useful outdoor class area is in place and the area is used for bug hunts and a wildlife area. Links to the curriculum will surely follow.
- 3) **Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife:** You are planting native species and have bird feeders, boxes and log piles, and some insect houses. You have a composting bin which will soon contribute valuable organic matter to the beds. A water butt is now available, but it needs to be connected to the down-pipe to collect the rainwater ideal for plants.  
There are no plans for a pond but there will be a water feature (a bog area could add bog plants to your range?)
- 4) **Growing Fruit/Vegetables and Healthy Eating:** An eco-friendly bottle greenhouse is under construction. A good start has been made; lettuce, beans, peas, radishes, tomatoes have been grown – and strawberries of course! Produce has been taken home.
- 5) **Design/Management and Maintenance:** The clearance of what was a dilapidated site has been carried out very well. The use of raised beds was a very good choice on clay soil. It is very clear that support for the project is very strong. There is good fencing and hedging. The enthusiastic support of Mars has been a great help.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:**

**It is very hard to think how more could have been achieved in the short time that the garden has been under development.**

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK:** Thought should perhaps be given to the removal of some of the younger trees on the south-west corner of the site, and the hedges trimmed back to maximise light on the "bottlehouse" and plants in that area; perhaps also some branches should be removed from above the raised beds to maximise light in that key part of the garden. A small raised bed for herbs in the S.E. end would work well, and compost and manure should be worked into the raised beds.

More water will be needed!

You will also obviously be pursuing your own ideas.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:

**SILVER**

**Rupert Atkinson**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

**28<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
13	10	10	12	15	60

## Sketchley Hill Primary School, Burbage, Leicestershire

Dear Mr. Pettigrew and Miss Waites,

I enjoyed being shown around by you both and was pleased with the knowledge and interest shown by Carys, Lani, Sam and Sammy. The fruit and vegetable area of the school garden is good with a great deal of interest for pupils. The wild life area is now much more accessible thanks to Mr Pettigrew who has put in many volunteer hours.

### **1. GARDENING ACTIVITIES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

Eco Warriors from each year group meet each Tuesday and Wednesday at lunchtime to work mainly in the fruit and vegetable area. Raised beds could help to organise crop rotation although this is part of the curriculum for Year 4 onwards. The garden had a range of perennials and annuals. The children showing me around had a fairly good knowledge of the garden and its plants.

### **2 THE GARDEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION AND THE CURRICULUM**

The garden is utilised in teaching several parts of the curriculum. e.g. Seasons, Life Cycles, Senses, parts of a flower, water pollution, and I am pleased that in the future it is hoped that more use will be made of the facilities by classes on a regular basis.

### **3 VALUE IN SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE**

The Caterpillar trail has now become much more accessible so is available for greater use within the curriculum. There were at least 6 bird boxes, one of which had been used by Great Tits. There are three log piles, a leaf pile and three recently built hedgehog homes. There is a mini-beast home and one for bees. A small pond with frogs, newts and several fish was well maintained with a fountain getting its power from a solar panel. There were several native plants supplied by the Woodland Trust along the Caterpillar Trail. It was pleasing to see that the pupils were encouraged to compost and understand the value of their wormery. All classes recycle.

### **4 GROWING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES AND HEALTHY EATING**

A good range of fruit and vegetables were grown including some very good cauliflower, and some peas started in a grow bag by the reception class. Mint and chives were also grown. The produce was used by the school kitchens and Years 3 and 6 do some cooking. I am sure that pupils would also enjoy having a cookery club, with tasting sessions, to make more use of the garden produce.

### **5 DESIGN, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

The general layout of the garden was well designed but many areas would benefit from more attention. The garden had few weeds, was tidy and litter free. As well as a greater use of the garden, more raised beds are planned. It was good to know that Menphys pupils make use of the garden too. The garden relied on Mr. Pettigrew for care during the holidays.

I think that the school should be pleased with the improvement in the garden's facilities that has been achieved thanks to the hard work of Mr. Pettigrew, supported by Miss Waites.

Following my assessment I am pleased to award the garden:

### **SILVER**

**Graham Lamb**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

8<sup>th</sup> July 2013

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
11	9	16	15	10	61

## Small Saints Pre- School, Holbeach, Lincolnshire

Dear Mrs Britton and Mrs Wright,

I was very pleased to visit again this year and see what has been achieved during the year. I wish my grandchildren lived nearer so they could attend this excellent Pre-School. Already this year it has achieved the Healthy Childcare Award and the Eat Better/Start Better Award.

### **1. GARDENING ACTIVITIES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

All 165+ children are involved with the garden with the 2+ and 3-4 year old children having their own areas. There are many containers in these areas and around the rest of the school which are filled with a variety of annual and perennial plants with the children being fully involved. I was pleased to note that the vegetable plot is now a raised bed. Jude showed me around the 3-4 year old area and clearly recognised many of the plants.

### **2. THE GARDEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION AND THE CURRICULUM**

Work is both child led and child centred. I noticed, while visiting, that around half of the school were involved in working outside. Potatoes, bugs and leaves are used for counting and seeds are put into sets. Children paint and draw flowers. Beans had been grown to illustrate a story and a display poster produced.

### **3. VALUE IN SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE**

There are several types of bird feeders and bird boxes. A blackbird has nested just above Year 3-4's outside door. There are bat and bee boxes and a hedgehog box. There are log and leaf piles, and bug hotels as well as plants to attract bees and butterflies. There is a frog lodge of drain pipes and the 3-4 year olds follow the frog life cycle with tadpoles in the classroom. A small pond has sensory and insect-attracting plants, and wildflowers planted around it. In addition there are containers with wildflowers and sensory plants. A few native plants are being grown in pots. The school has composters and a new water butt collecting from a shed roof. All children re-cycle paper and plastic but a health and safety expert has requested that food waste is not put into green cones.

### **4. GROWING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES AND HEALTHY EATING**

Children are taken through the full process of growing fruit and vegetables then preparing and eating them. Potatoes, carrots, onions and peas are examples of crops taken from plot to a snack bar table. Containers contain many different fruit trees, soft fruit and examples of most vegetables. Container grown herbs can be found in many areas of the garden e.g. sage, chives, mint, rosemary, parsley and thyme.

### **5. DESIGN, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

The school, which is a charity trust, has to raise all its funds. The grounds are very clean with few weeds and no litter. The school remains open throughout the year so watering is never a problem. The school plans to have a new area for birds and already has some feeders in place. Several wicker tepees with wooden toadstools for seats are now in place and a member of staff has attended the forest school. All areas have access for wheelchairs.

Following my assessment I am pleased to award the garden:

### **GOLD**

**Graham Lamb**

School Garden Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

11<sup>th</sup> July 2013

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
17	18	18	18	17	88

## South Wigston High School

Dear Robert,

Thanks to you and the gardening club members for showing us around your gardens.

It is clear that the restructuring of the age ranges/ classes in the school is a change that has brought challenges; hopefully, short term.

I make the following comments in line with our judging criteria:

- 1) **Gardening Activities Skills and knowledge:** The students showed great enthusiasm and a good knowledge in plant recognition, rotation and growing cycles and the benefits of double digging. They were clearly involved and committed to learning skills.
- 2) **Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum:** We understand the use of RHS level gardening is working well for the students and next year they will be able to take up qualifications through RHS courses. Some use of the Latin plant names and their meaning along with the compounds needed to grow healthy vegetable and flowers are displayed in the green house – a good way of learning. Clearly curriculum skills, such as maths and science are brought to bear in problem solving – such as when planning garden developments and selling produce.
- 3) **Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife:** There is a lot of good compost being produced and water is collected for the main allotment area, but a better system is being investigated. The main wildlife area is part of the science department and used under supervision, partly because of some safety issues with decking etc. Many things, such as bird boxes/pond etc are in place in this environment which should make it vibrant with wildlife.  
(It did seem that the maintenance of this excellent area has fallen a bit by the wayside, which is a great pity – it was unclear how much it is used, but it is a very good resource!)
- 4) **Growing Fruit/Vegetables and Healthy Eating:** Lots of student knowledge here with some use of produce in cooking leek and potato soup! This area has a greenhouse and a poly tunnel, in use, with a vine, a variety of vegetables, herbs and soft fruit and outside some recently planted fruit trees. There are a number of allotment beds, used for growing vegetables and some fruit, and an area where double digging has been practiced. (We would very much encourage more raised beds.).
- 5) **Design/Management and Maintenance:** A bed with the design of the school shield laid out with bedding plants produced by year 7 was impressive in the allotment/fruit tree area. Planting to deter pests in the vegetable beds showed organic practice and an understanding of the delicate balance in the eco system.  
(It was a pity that some areas of the gardens were maybe not seen by us at their best, but that was undoubtedly owing to the recent bad weather.)

**SUMMARY:** The ecosystem and environment is clearly of importance and a part of the management around the various gardening areas. Much has been achieved already with much more to come. It is very encouraging to see the students' enthusiasm and the work they are doing. Perhaps it would be beneficial to encourage a maintenance and management plan to bring the gardening area into the reach of more pupils across a wider curriculum. With the recent changes occurring in the structuring of the whole school this may be a useful time.

We are sure that, as you are giving them your support, the students we met will make a real success of the garden areas.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

### SILVER

Janet Lewis

School Judge for East Midlands in Bloom

Monday 25th June 2013

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
14	13	10	13	12	62

## St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Chesterfield.

Dear Ray and Liza, and children!

It was a pleasure to visit your school gardens and see how well you have utilised the space on a restricted school site, and developed such a good range of quality gardening. Your general shrub and herbaceous planting is excellent – a pleasure to see.

Please can you thank, on my behalf, all those from the Gardening Club, the Recycling Team, and the Foundation class who escorted us and commented on the gardens as we went round?

I make the following comments in line with our judging criteria:

- 1) **Gardening Activities Skills and knowledge:** All year 5 are involved in the Gardening Club, in rotation. Judging by the guides their understanding of what they do and their plant recognition is good. They are actively involved in planting and maintaining a wide range of plants including vegetables. There is a watering rota. All classes utilise the gardens for their activities.
  
- 2) **Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum:** Clearly from the children's contributions and the contents of the portfolios, the gardens are used in the curriculum on a regular basis. Well illustrated are science and maths – including scientific words, growth, plant life cycles, symmetry and rotation, – but also in art and other subject areas. All years have the opportunity to be involved. The Foundation year involvement with their lovely garden, with raised beds and a Japanese garden area was well illustrated with a special project on sunflower growing and measuring.
  
- 3) **Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife:** There are bird feeders, bird boxes, log piles and insect homes, and an area to encourage wildlife. There is a camera linked into a bird box. Recycling of food waste and composting is well organised. Water collection is good. There is a small meadow garden and sunflowers and other plants are grown to encourage butterflies. All in all real efforts to connect with the wildlife on the site are being made. The school takes part in the RSPB big school bird watch – 75 took part this year.
  
- 4) **Growing Fruit/Vegetables & Healthy Eating:** The raised beds, both in the “quad” area, the “kitchen garden” and the Foundation garden are well organised and maintained; clearly the planting has been handled well, from seed to harvest where possible. Carrots, strawberries, onions, beetroot, cauliflowers and potatoes etc are grown. Herbs are grown and tasted; some fruit trees have been planted. Efforts are being made to use produce in cookery.
  
- 5) **Design/Management and Maintenance.** The garden utilises every significant space available, (with planters at the school entrance) an excellent “kitchen garden” and Foundation year garden with raised beds. Charts related to gardening are well placed on fences/walls.  
**The whole site has very good ornamental garden areas (Friendship garden, central quad etc)**  
 The maintenance levels are high and the gardens are looked after throughout the year.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:** It is hard to see how any more of this restricted site can be developed. It is well maintained and the activities are well organised and the children are very involved in the process of gardening.

For the future perhaps the system of rotation should be understood by all children involved in fruit and veg.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:-

### GOLD

**Rupert Atkinson**

School Judge for East Midlands in bloom

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013

PTO

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
17	17	17	16	18	85

**ON BEHALF OF EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM, WE ARE PLEASED TO AWARD THE ST MARY'S SCHOOL GARDEN:**

**"BEST SCHOOL ORNAMENTAL GARDEN 2013"**

**Rupert Atkinson**

**For East Midlands in Bloom**

## William Rhodes Primary School, Chesterfield

Dear Nigel and Denise,

Thank you very much for showing me round your school garden, at such short notice. It was a genuine pleasure to visit the very attractive, and I'm sure well used, fenced area for principally nursery and reception children – but also the well constructed ornamental outside classroom.

Clearly a lot of work has been put in by you and the children, and it was tantalising to hear of the creation of a new, as yet unused, allotment garden nearby. The main courtyard, with its complete hard surfacing will take time to tackle, but the long bed has potential.

Although you would not have had time to study judging criteria we use for assessment in advance, I make the following comments related to them.

- 1) **Gardening Activities Skills and knowledge:** The nursery and reception children have a lovely area in which to play and be creative, learning something about gardening in a safe outdoor classroom. There is a gardening club and you do grow to eat. The ornamental garden is supported by children's maintenance and parents and children worked on the hanging baskets.
- 2) **Garden's Contribution to Education/Curriculum:** As you pointed out, so many curriculum aims and objectives for nursery and reception classes can be illustrated and advanced in the garden areas, including science/maths, the arts etc. There are outside seating areas for classrooms and the "music wall" is extremely sensory!
- 3) **Value in Sustaining the Environment and Wildlife:** There is a wildlife recognition board, you have an excellent rainwater collection system and you do compost. There are bird feeders, bird boxes, and at least one bat box; there are insect houses, a border of wildflowers, as well as a bug hotel, a willow bower and a wormery. You don't use chemicals or fertilisers but leaves are collected for compost – you aim to be organic. You are also working on a "wild tunnel" class area.
- 4) **Growing Fruit/Vegetables and Healthy Eating:** You are growing tomatoes, strawberries, raspberries, rhubarb. There is also a range of herbs. Cookery classes use the product when available. Clearly the new allotment area will bring the growing of a much wider range of fruit and vegetables, involve more children and expand gardening skills considerably!
- 5) **Design/Management and Maintenance:** The site is very well designed and maintained, and full of a wide range of shrubs and herbaceous plants of quality and colour. The rather steep banks into the garden area on the south side are well grassed for children's scrambling!  
General tidiness was excellent and the fencing, indeed all structures were in excellent and safe condition.  
**The ornamental class area for older children is quite excellent. It has real impact as you come in through the school gate.**

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:** I know that you will realise, from the above criteria that your garden has only advanced part way to be able to compete on a level playing field with some other schools. Specifically I would point to a dedicated fruit and vegetable area; the involvement of children in that garden area and the development of their skills. But the current garden is excellent and you and the school should be very proud of it. We look forward to assessing your garden again next year when you developments are in place.

Marks out of 20 are awarded under each heading above and I am pleased to award the garden:

### **SILVER**

**Rupert Atkinson**

School Judge for East Midlands in Bloom  
2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL
13	12	14	12	18	69