How to make your school garden a success

Six steps to turn an outdoor space into a thriving place to learn, grow and connect.



Gardens can be the 21st-century classroom. Before you start planting, a little planning will help you create a school garden with a clear purpose and a lasting place in school life.

Why start a school garden?

A school garden can bring learning to life, helping pupils explore nature, life cycles and where food comes from. It can also encourage teamwork, responsibility and a stronger connection with the outdoors.

1 Find your people

Identify enthusiastic members of staff and pupils who can champion the project. A small planning group gives everyone a voice and helps share the work.

Invite people with different skills, from growing and practical maintenance to organising resources and linking activities to lessons.

2 Agree your purpose

Decide what you want the garden to achieve. Will it teach pupils about nutrition and food, provide produce to share with local groups, or become a living classroom?

Ask what benefits it should bring to your school and community. A clear purpose will guide your decisions about the space, planting and activities.

Build a plan that works

Choose the right location, share responsibilities and connect your garden to the curriculum.

3 Work through the practicalities

Choose your site. Look for a sunny position suitable for the fruit and vegetables you want to grow.

Plan your water supply. Think about collecting rainwater and keeping water close to the growing area, so regular watering is manageable.

Once you have a site in mind, use these questions to shape your plan:

1. **Who will maintain the garden?** Include weekends and school holidays.
2. **Who will lead the project?** Agree responsibilities and support.
3. **What is your gardening calendar?** Plan what to plant and when.
4. **How will pupils be kept safe?** Set clear rules and supervision.
5. **What health and safety arrangements are needed?** Plan these before activities begin.
6. **Who will enjoy the harvest?** Decide how produce will be used or shared.
7. **Where will gardening tools be stored?** Keep equipment organised and secure.
8. **How can parents and carers get involved?** Offer clear ways to help.
9. **How will you fund the garden?** Allow for setup and ongoing costs.

4 Make it part of the curriculum

Build the garden into lesson planning so it becomes a regular learning space. Hands-on activities can help pupils explore concepts through observation and experience.

Use growing projects to support science, maths, writing, art and learning about food. Choose activities that suit each year group and revisit them as the garden changes.

INVOLVE YOUR COMMUNITY & GET GROWING

Help your garden flourish

Start with a manageable plan, welcome support and enjoy watching your school garden develop.



5 Grow your support network

Invite parents, carers and the wider community to take part. Local growers, farmers and experienced gardeners may be able to share knowledge, time or practical help.

Explore funding opportunities and donations of useful supplies. Even a small contribution, such as gardening tools designed for smaller hands, can make a difference.

A school garden can strengthen the links between school, home and community. Keep people involved by sharing progress and celebrating what pupils achieve.

6 Start planting

Now it is time to sow seeds, care for young plants and watch them grow. Plan crops around the seasons, the time available for maintenance and your curriculum.

Choose a manageable starting point and plan when pupils will be able to see, care for and harvest each crop. Review what works and develop the garden as your confidence grows.

Ready to plan your growing space?

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