

Interim report

October 2016





Trafalgar Infant School, Richmond,
selling preserves at the FGSL Schools
Marketplace at City Hall.

Foreword

Garden Organic is the UK's leading organic growing charity. Dedicated to promoting organic gardening in homes, communities and schools, the charity encourages people to grow in the most sustainable way, and demonstrates the lasting benefits of organic growing to the health and well-being of individuals and the environment.

Our Education team has been working with schools for over 20 years, helping students and communities access the benefits of growing organic food. Our work has demonstrated the powerful impact organic food growing can have on learning, health and well-being. We know that shaping attitudes and behaviours through organic food growing in schools has long-lasting benefits for our society, particularly in facing the significant challenges of rising childhood obesity and climate change.

I am deeply proud of what we have achieved so far — 87% of London schools are now growing food and considerably more pupils, parents, community members and businesses are involved.

That is why Garden Organic has been at the forefront of campaigns to transform school food culture and why Food Growing Schools: London (FGSL) is such an exciting chapter in our history. I am deeply proud of what we have achieved so far — 87% of London schools are now growing food and considerably more pupils, parents, community members and businesses are involved than when FGSL started in 2013.

As set out in this report, there are significant benefits for pupils and the infectious enthusiasm I have seen whilst talking to them gives me hope that we are changing lives. However, there is still work to be done. We haven't reached every school, let alone every pupil, and we know many continue to need our support.

There are now several policy imperatives for transforming school food culture, and recognition of the importance of food growing in achieving this. At the same time — following the November 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review — real term cuts in school budgets of up to 8% are anticipated by 2020. Local government spending will also reduce, affecting school support services along with health promotion activities. This presents very real opportunities as well as challenges to initiating organic food growing in schools.

Together our partnership ensures food growing in schools is well supported. I would like to thank our partners for the expertise, resources and most of all the dedication that they continue to bring to FGSL. I also want to thank all of the schools that are already involved in organic food growing — they are achieving a profound impact for their pupils and communities.



James Campbell

James Campbell
*Chief Executive,
Garden Organic*



Schools take part in growing activities
at the Edible Garden Show at
Alexandra Palace, London.

Introduction

The simple — and ambitious — goal of the Food Growing Schools: London (FGSL) partnership is for every school in London to engage in food growing activities. FGSL aims to strengthen and build upon existing work to support all schools to embed food growing into daily life so that every pupil, and the local community, can benefit, and that school leaders, staff and volunteers have the skills and confidence to get involved.

The FGSL partnership is led by Garden Organic, the national charity for organic growing. It includes five partners: Capital Growth (a Sustain initiative), Food for Life (a Soil Association programme), The Royal Horticultural Society, School Food Matters and Trees for Cities.

Each partner draws on their strength and experience to deliver support to schools wanting to get involved in food growing; awards programmes, training, events, competitions and a wealth of learning resources are available to schools. Together these help schools design and build gardens and use them to support learning across the curriculum. The Big Lottery is the main funding partner for the programme from late 2013 until early 2017, with additional funding provided by the Mayor of London.

The evaluation of FGSL is led by the University of the West of England. This interim report summarises the progress of the programme in its third year, assessing the impacts of FGSL for participants and wider stakeholders, focusing on schools and those supporting school food growing.



Our impact

Since its launch in 2013 the work of Food Growing Schools: London has led to significant positive impacts for schools, their pupils and communities.

In year three FGSL increased its focus on attracting schools with little or no experience of food growing. Some of the most successful work built upon local training events, which have evolved into peer support forums that bring interested schools together. Additionally, more advanced schools have begun to share good practice. FGSL's work is therefore not only increasing the food growing knowledge and skills within schools, it is building sustainability by creating strong, supportive local networks.

More schools and pupils are growing food

Work undertaken by FGSL is contributing to an increase in the number of pupils growing food since the project started in 2013. Double the number of pupils (24%) are now involved.



FGSL is well known, well regarded and wide reaching

There is strong awareness and take up of FGSL partnership activities and approximately 1,000 people have received FGSL training to date. This has been achieved by the collective reach of the FGSL partnership and support from 25 of the 33 London Boroughs. Participants are very positive about the quality of the support provided and find the resources and events offered valuable.

25 London boroughs now promote food growing in schools

“We want young people to be able to make educated and healthy choices around food, and we’re putting the foundations in for that. They tune into the natural world and the seasons. Our work has helped children to live on this planet with a lighter touch.”

Teacher, Rhyl Primary School, London

FGSL has boosted parental and community involvement

Food growing has helped schools increase involvement from parents and the local community, including businesses, volunteers and voluntary organisations. This has the dual benefit of strengthening the school community and building the sustainability of food growing within the school. FGSL has made progress in establishing corporate volunteering in schools, with schools and volunteers reporting very positive experiences of working together.

1000s of volunteers





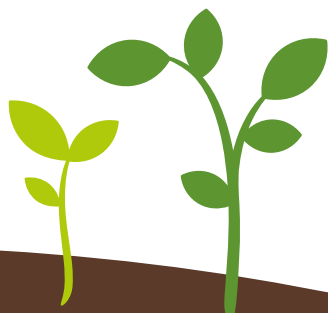
Thomasina Miers, former Master Chef winner and Wahaca Founder, harvests picnic food with students at the launch of FGSL.

Food growing embedded in more schools

The Food Growing in Schools Taskforce (2012) highlighted the value to be gained from embedding food growing across all aspects of school life (see page 8). Evaluation surveys have sought to understand how well food growing is integrated into school life and show that one in four schools who have responded are currently linking food growing to subjects across the curriculum and into lessons.

A strong, sustainable food growing network

As a network building and support programme, FGSL is one party in helping to create these positive outcomes. Much of the impact will derive from the work of teachers, other staff and volunteers, which FGSL support. In the 2016 survey 55% of schools reported that FGSL had influenced their delivery of food growing, shaping pupil outcomes.



Christ Church C of E Battersea sell their produce at City Hall, London.



Increased knowledge and changed behaviours

Schools state that food growing is having a positive impact on the education, health and well-being of their pupils, with improvements seen in a number of areas; enhanced knowledge, skills and confidence, improved behaviour and raised awareness of the wider social, economic and environmental benefits of food growing.



76.2% of schools reported pupils had enhanced knowledge and skills



79.2% of schools reported improved behaviour or attainment



61.7% said students were more aware of nature, healthy eating, and sustainability

Our Achievements...

**FGSL has had
a big impact
across London...**

25 London boroughs
now promote food growing
in schools

87%
schools are
involved in food
growing

**More schools
& pupils
involved**



1 in 4
schools now link food
growing to curriculum
activities

**Food growing
used as
teaching tool**



61.7%
of pupils are more aware
of healthy eating &
sustainability

79.2%
of pupils have
improved behaviour
or attainment

**Improved skills,
knowledge &
behaviour**

BARKING &
DAGENHAM



**2 Food
Flagship
Boroughs**

Croydon & Lambeth.
Awarded £1.2m by the Mayor
of London & Department for
Education to work in schools,
businesses & the
community



22%
of schools
now work with
businesses
& voluntary
organisations

HAVERING



1000
school staff &
volunteers have
attended food
growing training

**Increased
community
involvement**

www.foodgrowingschools.org

Source: Figures based on evaluation surveys with lead school teachers in Sept 2013 (n=504) and July 2016 (n=241)


Why grow food in schools?


In 2012, the Food Growing in Schools Taskforce investigated the extent and impact of food growing in schools. The Taskforce, and subsequently an increasing body of research, have shown that food growing can bring many benefits to schools and pupils.


There is evidence that integrating food growing across the curriculum maximises impact. The Taskforce found that whilst the majority of schools in England were growing food to some extent, more work was needed to increase that number and the extent to which food growing is embedded.


The Taskforce recognised the wealth of resources and expertise already available and called upon organisations to coordinate their efforts to tackle these challenges and help schools access support, whatever their level of food growing. Led by Garden Organic, the FGSL partnership is a manifestation outcome of this.

Relevant policy

 **Universal Infant Free School Meals 2014 and accompanying School Food Plan** promotes use of food growing to support development of positive food culture and encourage school meal take-up

 **Revised National Curriculum 2014** Gives explicit emphasis to food, nutrition, cooking and growing

 **Ofsted's new Common Inspection Framework** inspectors now consider pupils' "knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy" and "make informed choices about healthy eating, [and] fitness"

 **National Childhood Obesity Plan** proposes a new rating scheme for primary schools to allow them to demonstrate the actions they are taking to tackle obesity

 **City-wide strategy for healthy sustainable food:** The Greater London Authority sponsored Food Flagship Boroughs of Lambeth and Croydon developing and showcasing a whole-environment approach to food.

Why grow food?

Growing food means happy, healthy children that...



Know where food comes from



Eat more fruit and veg



Achieve more and learn new skills



Are more confident

FGS Taskforce Report

The keys to successful 'Food Growing in Schools':

- **School leadership**
- **Professional development**
- **Resources**
- **Community involvement**

*See policy research: www.foodgrowingschools.org/why_grow/



Children at Hitherfield Primary school during 'Herby Bread Day'

Working with local businesses to grow food

Hitherfield primary School is a diverse community primary school with 600 pupils. In 2014 the school started an ambitious project with Trees for Cities to create an Edible Playground. A 'Build it Day' brought in parents and the local community to construct an allotment and showcase plans to stakeholders and funders. Local businesses have since become involved in food festival events at the school. On 'Herby Bread Day' children built a sensory garden and a baker ran a bread making workshop. This was great for engaging the local community and created learning opportunities across the curriculum including English, (describing herbs using adjectives) Maths (counting to measure how long to water) and science (discussion of the senses during herb tasting sessions).

"I would recommend working with schools. It helped our business to tell our story and give our products a face. Children that eat my bread call it 'Duncan Bread'!" Duncan Salisbury-Gaumont, Elephant Bakehouse

"I'm really pleased to host the Schools Marketplace in City Hall. I want to help Londoners to have access to better food, and lead healthier lifestyles, so it's great to see these young people growing their own grub and developing entrepreneurial skills." **Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan**

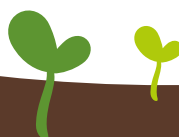


Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, at the Schools Marketplace at City Hall in July 2016, with Rosie Boycott, Chair of the London Food Board (left).

Marketplace events

Marketplace events are a clear example of how integrating food growing across the curriculum has great benefits for pupils and schools.

The FGSL 'Grow Your Own Business' theme enables schools to bring their school grown produce to market. Pupils get involved in every aspect of their horticultural business, from deciding what to grow, caring for their garden to marketing and selling their produce. Mathematical, literacy, creative, communication and business skills are all developed and a wide-range of produce sold. Schools report the project has also improved pupil behaviour, attention and attainment and helped them to make better links with community.



Delivery

As a partnership, FGSL has the expertise, knowledge and skills to support food growing in schools. The partnership offers a wealth of activities, resources and support for food growing in schools.

Work in year three of the FGSL programme has built on previous years and also included two pan-London conferences. The FGSL website is a hub for information and resources, developed over three years and the project has included a communications strategy to promote it widely and raise awareness of the benefits of food growing in schools.

Project highlights

-  Six Schools Marketplaces at City Hall
– and more in local boroughs
-  Two School Food Growing Conferences
-  Schools Heritage Seed Library Project
– with Garden Organic
-  Schools Oca Growing Project
– as part of 'Grow Around the World' activities
-  Partnership with the Food Flagship Boroughs
of Croydon and Lambeth
-  Partnership with Borough Councils through
Sustain's Good Food for London report



Staff and volunteer training
in Walthamstow



Resources

Development of free learning resources, such as: Grow Your Own school activity packs for teachers and a Food Growing Assembly Pack for engaging children in food growing. And more!



Get involved!

FGSL has developed an abundance of ways that schools, local organisations, and volunteers can get involved in growing food. This includes everything from FREE learning resources, to training and events, competitions and assemblies, as well as 1:1 borough support and access to expert FGSL partner programmes.



Training & Events

From horticulture skills to curriculum ideas

How to Get Involved

Step 1:
Complete FGSL schools survey

Step 2:
Receive support

Step 3:
Reap the benefits of food growing in your school

1:1
Support



Competitions

Win exclusive school food growing prizes, resources and training!



Growathon

engaging 54,000 pupils in food growing in London by July 2016

Growathon
Ready. Set.
Grow!

Resources
Free training & events
Competitions
FGSL Directory
Support
Campaigns

TARGET

50,000
40,000
30,000
20,000
10,000

Grow Your
Own termly
activities

What next for food growing in schools?

Food Growing Schools: London is a unique programme that has brought together a group of partners that not only have knowledge of both schools and food growing, but collectively act as a holistic resource to support food growing in schools.

This approach has proved highly effective in engaging and supporting London schools in food growing, and is already demonstrating an impact for schools, their pupils and wider communities.

However, there is still more work that can be done and the aim of reaching every London school continues, as does the desire to see food growing more deeply embedded within schools.



Going forward Food Growing Schools: London will —

- ✓ Continue to communicate the benefits of food growing
- ✓ Showcase the breadth of support available to support schools to start food growing from different sectors
- ✓ Seek support from London borough councils to support and promote food growing — as part of their policy agendas



Dormers Wells High, Ealing, winners of the Best Dressed Stall at the Schools Marketplace at City Hall.

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All statistics in this report are based on evaluation surveys with lead school teachers in Sept 2013 (n=504) and July 2016 (n=241)



MAYOR OF LONDON