**Growing stronger at St. Johns Infant School**

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St. John’s Infant School in Churt has two new additions to its gardening space – some beautiful metal vegetable beds, grant funded by the Surrey Climate Commission to the school.

During May half term 2023, the school ‘green team’ constructed and planted the beds for pupils to use. On their return the children were greeted with red tomatoes, yellow peppers, lettuce leaves and rainbow coloured chard, matching the rainbow logo colours of the school. The green team provided pupils with new tools too – pots, trowels, watering cans and brooms.

It’s all part of the schools Net Zero pledge – to be more sustainable and teach the children about biodiversity and growing food.

Mrs Stevens, Headteacher at the school, said “It was a delight to see the children’s faces on their way into school, and they have thoroughly enjoyed watering the plants and watching them grow.

“The reward of growing flowers and eating food or watching insects on the flowers and vegetables is all inspiring. Children already use the vegetable and flower beds in practical lessons, growing vegetables from seed, watching them change and reporting the findings.

“We are truly grateful to our PTA for applying for this grant and for our green team for building and filling the beds. Huge thanks to Surrey Climate Commission for the funding too”.

Children attending the school have a forest school session each week led by a qualified forest school practitioner. The children develop their knowledge and skills in the natural world alongside their academic studies. There’s an understanding that parents need support too. It’s a school with a strong reputation for afterschool clubs and wrap around care. Visit  <http://www.stjohns-farnham.surrey.sch.uk/> for a virtual tour, brilliant Ofsted and SIAMS reports, parents’ comments, newsletters and much more.

**DETAILS OF THE PROJECT**

1. HOW THE PROJECT FOCUSSED ON SUSTAINABILITY

This project is helping educate and inform children and their parents about food and biodiversity and contribute something physical and beautiful to the school community. Children experience growing flowers and food, learn in a practical environment about the food chain, insects, pollination and photosynthesis.

1. HOW THE PROJECT SUPPORTS LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTION

It ties in with the Churt Village Parish net zero programme and the school’s Lets Go Zero pledge. Both support and encourage community action. Churt Horticultural and Produce Society (CHAPS) supported this initiative. Children have the opportunity to exhibit their goods at the Village Flower Shows. These websites offer more information.

<https://www.churtzero.org/>

<http://www.stjohns-farnham.surrey.sch.uk/About-us/Net-Zero>

<https://chaps-online.co.uk/>

1. WHERE IS THE PROJECT

The vegetable and flower beds have been installed within the school grounds. They sit alongside existing vegetable beds and a health and wellbeing bench to form a beautiful, bright garden space for the children.

1. HOW WE ARE MONITORING THE IMPACT

In a practical sense: by watching things grow. The reward of growing flowers and eating food or watching insects on the flowers and vegetables. Children are able to use the vegetable and flower beds in practical lessons, growing vegetables from seed, watching them change and reporting the findings. Science and sustainability in action. The children’s school council, and parent and staff surveys offer qualitative and quantitative feedback. Verbal feedback so far is that both children and parents are delighted with the resource.

1. HOW THE GRANT WAS SPENT

THE AMOUNT OF FUNDING RECEIVED WAS: £930.00.

The vegetable beds came down in price from the original quote (they were on sale) so a little more was spent on compost and plants. The breakdown of expenditure is as follows:

2x metal vegetable beds and liners costing £781.20

Soil and peat free compost £90.00 in total.

Seeds, watering can and plants £59.00 in total.

PTA funds and school donations will be used for the ongoing maintenance and subsequent years’ plants and seeds. A ‘green team’ will also help the school look after the beds.

1. HOW WE PUBLICISED THE PROJECT

* The ‘grand revealing’ of the new veg beds took place week commencing 5th June 2023.
* Details were shared on the school and PTA Facebook pages and a news piece was added to the school website.
* The press release was shared with the Farnham and Haslemere Herald and distributed to other local press contacts in June and July 2023, including the Parish Council and Parish Magazine.
* Details about the SCC funding was added to the Net Zero website page.

<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsCofEInfantSchool/>

[www.stjohns-farnham.surrey.school.uk](http://www.stjohns-farnham.surrey.school.uk)