



Steve Thorpe Gardening Contract and maintenance work Working in Schools, businesses and the Community.

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Taking your project into the community.

The gardening club's work in the local community at Haworth has become such an important part of community and school life. It is as though the school is now the centre of the community, leading the village in such things as it's entry into the Yorkshire in Bloom competition for which it gained Gold Standard last year.

It all started with us taking the children out twice a year to plant up the fire station, police station, railway station and the mangers above the park and at the war memorial. It is all about teaching the children respect, getting them giving something back to the people in the community, who help us on a daily basis and may one day risk their lives to save ours. One of my pet hates in life is people who always expect something back in return for doing something for others.



At first the children used to say "how much are we getting for doing that, but they have now experienced what a nice feeling you get out of doing something for others without expecting something back in return.

The fire station is always the children's favourite as the fire fighters get the fire engine out and let the children water the plants in with the hose.

I usually try and make all our projects have a fun element to them as gardening is all about staying active, fit, and safe but having lots of fun along the way.

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Planting the mangers at the war memorial is an important part of our work, as it teaches the children what the area represents and what sacrifices these heroes made and how the area should be respected.

I then started taking the children down to the local residential home giving planting demonstrations to the residents.

This went down really well, but I still thought there was a lot more scope in our work with the elderly.

My vision was to get the residents around the tables with the children actually getting their hands dirty potting up the plants and sowing the seed.



This new venture worked brilliantly and proved to be great stimulation for the elderly residents, who spend so much of their days sat around a room in their chair. Our work has now developed to such an extent that we have just made some wooden raised vegetable growing areas for the residents to plant and grow and then eat their own vegetables. The area is accessible and is an ideal height for wheelchairs or any residents with other disabilities.

When the tomatoes and cucumbers are ready in the school greenhouse, the children take a box full across to the doctor's surgery with a note in thanking them for keeping us well throughout the year, and they potted up plants which they had grown for each member of staff at the medical practice.

I really believe this sort of work is important in teaching the children a big thing that is missing in modern day life – respect, thoughtfulness and appreciation for others. It doesn't take much but means so much.

A major part of our work in the local community is the children's participation and support of the local flower and vegetable show.

This all started after the introduction of the vegetable growing area, which opened up so many new windows for everyone at the school.



At the time the show was going through hard times with the numbers of entries dwindling and with the show being mainly supported by elderly people. The children have given it a new lease of life and everyone loves having them at the show – giving them expert advice on how to grow. We do not grow things specifically for showing, as this would take all the fun out of growing, as thing would get too serious. What we do is enter what we have ready, and if we win anything it is a bonus. During the past five years the gardening club has won 20 trophies at local flower and vegetable shows. After the show the children collect all their produce and take it to the O.A.P's meeting the week after, so that they can taste the children's delicious home grown produce.

At the end of the growing season the gardening club have a float in the Carnival Procession. This is a real fun day where the children can really celebrate all their successes.

The back of the wagon is trimmed up with the planters that are outside the school reception area. This gives a real mass of colour.

The gardening club also leads the local church in it's Harvest Festival thanks giving. They make a display at the front of the Church of it's own grown produce and flowers.