



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

50 Prince Street, Haworth, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD22 8JD

Telephone: (01535) 647496 Mobile: 07969658743

E Mail: gardening@steve-thorpe.co.uk

Growing vegetables at school and using them as part of school meals.

I have talked about how the introduction of the vegetable growing area had opened up so many windows for everyone at Haworth Primary School.

Well the thing that really put us on the map and gave so much inspiration to so many other schools throughout the country, was when the children started taking the produce that they had grown into the school kitchen and eating it as part of their school meals. They are never going to be able to produce enough of their own grown vegetables to supply the school kitchen, but what we do is have set days where their vegetables are included or added to the menu and signs are put up in the dining room saying what is out of the school garden on that particular day.



I am now going around so many other schools giving advice and helping to set up similar growing projects to the one at Haworth Primary School.

I talked about the use of raised beds for the vegetable growing areas. The size and height of these can be adapted to the space that they are going into and the height best suited for the age group that will be growing in them.

Remember you might need wheel chair access around the raised beds as they tend to be an ideal height for people using wheel chairs.

www.steve-thorpe.co.uk
gardening@steve-thorpe.co.uk
Tel. 01535 647496

The use of raised beds also enables the hundreds of schools that only have hard standing areas such as tarmac yards to have a vegetable growing area.

The children at Haworth Primary School grow about twenty five different vegetables, so this can play such a vital part in encouraging everyone at the school to try vegetables they might never have eaten before and find out just how good they taste, as well as encouraging healthy eating. The thing that I have mentioned is the importance of giving the children ownership of any project from the start, and seeing it all the way through to the final product. This is just the same with using the vegetables as part of the school meals. It is no good the children just handing the produce over to the kitchen staff. What they need to do is help to shell the peas, wash and cut up the carrots and cabbage, peel the potatoes and if possible help or at least watch the vegetables being cooked.



This is all bringing old values back into schools that have been missing on so many occasions for so many years.

The Food for Life Partnership has now been set up. This is a lottery funded initiative led by the Soil Association together with the Focus on Food Campaign, Garden Organic and the Health Education Trust. Their goal is to revolutionise school meals, reconnect young people with where their food comes from and inspire families to cook and grow food. 180 flagship schools will be set up across the country to help other schools reach Bronze, Silver and Gold marks over a period of time.



Haworth Primary School is one of 6 in the Yorkshire and Humberside region to become a flagship school and everyone at the school is working so hard to hopefully reach that Gold mark. To do this the school will have to serve at least 75% freshly prepared, 50% local and 30% organic food, ensure that every pupil learns to cook and has the opportunity to grow food and involve pupils in the life of a local farm.

These are very exciting times so to get your school involved or get more information log onto www.foodforlife.org.uk or phone 0117 314 5180.

All the brilliant work at Haworth Primary School led to me being named National School Food Hero by the Soil Association. This was a tremendous honour for the whole school and I received my award from the man himself, Jamie Oliver at the NEC in Birmingham.

Since then the Food for Life Partnership have asked me to become an advisor, so it is brilliant to be involved in their fantastic work.

So much curriculum work can be linked to the growing project or done out in the school garden such as Science, numeracy, literacy, geography, history, DT, Art and Design and ICT. Getting the children growing and making the growing project a major part of community life covers every category of the Every Child Matters agenda. What other activity could achieve all this?

Last year the children at Haworth Primary School grew a seven stone pumpkin. The amount of fun, curriculum links and life skills that were covered using this subject was unbelievable. Miss Roe the nursery manager made a book based on the gigantic turnip story.

Steve Thorpe tried pulling the pumpkin out without success. Miss Roe Joined in, but still they could not pull out the gigantic pumpkin. Every pupil in the nursery joined in from the biggest to the smallest and when the smallest joined in they pulled the pumpkin out. This gave the whole class a big, but fun message about the importance of teamwork.

We then got a local chef, who is also a parent, to come into the school and make pumpkin soup with the children. Notice the importance about making it with the children. This was then sold to the rest of the school and parents for 50p per cup and raised £120.00 for Children in Need. What a brilliant ending to such a good story.

