Ratho Primary School Garden Report January 2010

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January 2010

Summary of School Garden progress
September 2009 - January 2010

Following on from the work carried out in August by Gus & Earth Calling, The Garden Group, lead by the parents, continued to work on the garden building the structure & planting bulbs & shrubs. The school children were involved as much as possible.

The Garden Path.

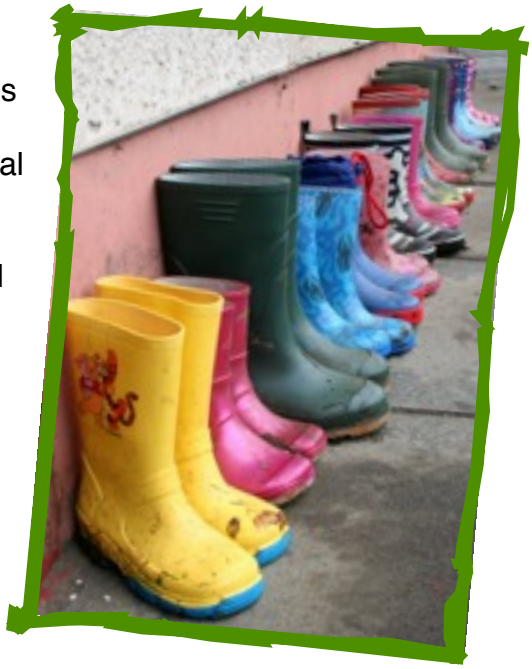
Half the path had been priced to be built by Earth Calling & the other half to be built by Capital Skills. Earth Calling ran out of time due to wet weather & Capital Skills could not say when they would be able to come & carry out the work due to other commitments. The parents decided, that to keep the ball rolling & the garden progressing, to take on the task of building the path.

A group of the parents worked over four Tuesday evenings to lay the side boards & steps for the new path. A membrane was laid down to prevent weeds growing on the path and then a deep layer of woodchip was applied.

There was a lot of community involvement to get the path completed and the bark laid before the late nights of winter arrived. Many parents with their children worked tirelessly until the light was lost and the Primary Seven children spent a morning barrowing the last of the woodchip onto the path to complete the job.

Planting Daffodil Bulbs, Shrubs & Wild Flowers.

Over several weeks, Garden Group parents came into the school on Wednesday mornings to work with the children in the garden. The main task was to plant daffodil bulbs but shrubs and plants donated by parents from their own gardens & a donation of wild flowers from The Royal Bank Of Scotland were also planted in the recently developed shrubbery bed.



Each class had the opportunity to get involved with digging & planting. The weather was not the best & wellies were brought into school but we still ended up with quite a few muddy children!

All the children really enjoyed the chance to be involved in their garden and when spring arrives we hope there will be a fantastic display of daffodils arcing around the new amphitheatre area.

Plants Ordered

Wildlife hedging, willow for a tunnel at the end of the new path, fruit trees & native trees were ordered from various suppliers to be delivered at the end of November ready for Earth Calling to plant up in the garden the first week of December.

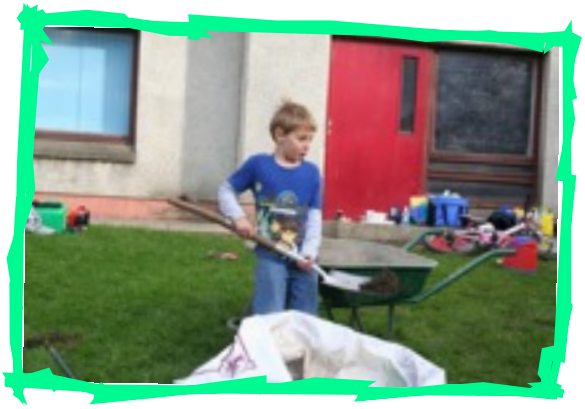
The Big Work Weekend

The Gardening Group felt that there was still work to complete, creating the structure of the garden, before Gus & Earth Calling came to plant hedging & trees in December. We were losing the light nights as it was now October, we therefore decided to have one last push & tackle some of the major tasks over a weekend. Mrs Walshe, Head Teacher, provided janitorial cover and access to the Community Centre & we set to work.

Rather than creating a second raised bed it was decided to build a sleeper wall, behind which we would create a gentle slope and a sheltered area. Sleepers were ordered via Special Skills, foundations dug, cement mixed & the sleepers installed.

At the entrance to the garden, the chestnut fence was removed, ground dug & prepared for the wildlife hedge & the fence then reinstated closer to the kerb. A small wooden gate was fitted allowing access to the path & the garden.

The wild area to the right of the path was cleared, existing shrubs & trees were pruned.



Sponsorship from B&Q was used to buy plants, shrubs & fruit bushes for this area and also climbers for the perimeter fence, these were all planted.

We had a great turn out of parents & children coming along over the weekend to help with the many different jobs going on. We achieved a great deal & with the addition of plants the area suddenly looks like a real garden!

There are still jobs to finish off but that will now take place in the spring with the light nights & better weather.

Gus Egan & The Earth Calling Team

Hedge, Tree and Willow Planting Dec 2009

The Earth Calling team spent three days in early December preparing the ground and planting out hedging, trees and willow.

One of the things the children had wanted to have in the garden was a hedge to attract birds, insects & wild animals such as hedgehogs. A mixed native hedge comprising of Blackthorn, Alder, Beech, Dogwood, Oak, Maple Guelder Rose, Wild Privet, Dog Rose, Scotch Rose, Sweet Briar, Spindle & Wild Crabapple was planted. Each child in the school got the chance to plant one hedge plant over the 30 metre length of the new hedge.

A small coppice of native trees comprising of Rowan, Oak, & Birch was planted towards the top of the garden triangle & a very small orchard of Apple, Plum & Pear has been planted towards the bottom of the main garden area, close to the vegetable boxes.

A Willow Tunnel has been created over the path as it enters the main part of the garden & the Tunnel is complimented by a Willow Dome structure, a great place for the children to hide away in or shelter from the sunshine.

The addition of these new plants complimenting the shrubs planted by the parents & children has completely transformed the space. Ratho Primary School now has a garden to be proud of & a wonderful year ahead watching all the plants flourish, learning how to look after them & developing the garden further.

Some Pictures of the Garden, January 2010

Finance

Please see separate sheets, Pentland Community Partnership Grant 2009 & Sponsorship & Funding.

Pentland Community Partnership Grant 2009
The £5000.00 has all been spent implementing the basic structure of the garden. A report along with receipts has been submitted to the funders.

Sponsorship & Funding.
A detailed account of the funding the garden has received to date, the funder, the amount, how the funds have been used, how much is still available.

We have recently received a donation from a school parent of £200.00 to be used towards a bench or significant item in memory of a member of their family. No publicity is wanted regarding this donation.

All garden funds are held in the Ratho Primary School Parent Council account & administered by the parent council treasurer, Angie Muir.

The Next Step

Garden Group meeting on Thursday 28th January 2010

Follow up a lead to acquire large standing stones from the local quarry at Hillwood, Ratho Station.

Feedback has been requested from the teachers of each class as to how they wish to use the garden.

The local Cubs group have asked if they can become involved in a part of the garden as part of a challenge badge supporting a local community project.

The Ratho Action Group (RAG) within the school now have a Veg Group so we need to look at what will be grown in the Vegetable boxes.

The PTA Spring Fair is on March 13th 2010. The RAG Veg Group plan to have a plant stall.

Free hedging plants & a silver birch growing pack have been ordered from The Woodland Trust, delivery is in March 2010.

We now have a Wormery, Miss Dignan of P2/3 has expressed an interest in her class setting it up & looking after it.

January 2010
Garden Gear owned by the Garden Group

A great deal of the garden equipment used in the garden is supplied by the parents, hand tools for gardening, lawn mower to maintain the lawn, hose reel for supplying water. We have started to use some of the funding to purchase certain items of equipment for the garden that are vitally necessary for the upkeep & maintenance of the area. Ideally we would like somewhere within the school to collectively store all the equipment but at the moment parents have offered to look after the equipment we have acquired.

Date Purchased	Item	Where it is stored
9 Oct 2009	Brush Cut Strimmer	Gillian Brown's Garage
11 Oct 2009	Fuel Can	Gillian Brown's Garage

January 2010
Members of Garden Group

Catriona Black
Gillian Brown
Viv Bowden
Helen Day
Ruth Gillan
Nicola Glover
Pete Hill
Mike Humphries
Shona Johnson
Cindy McDougall
Helen MacGregor
Jill MacDonald
Paul Martin
Gillian Mair
Caroline Neilson
Christine Paterson
Joanne Simpson
Jane Smith
Lynn Steer
Debbie Tully
James Tully

Plus several others who drop by to help out when organised work parties are taking place.