



The termly newspaper for the *Open Futures Network*

# openit

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## The Open Futures Olympics issue

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# A Primary Curriculum grounded in values

*Professor David Leat explores the contribution made by Open Futures to the development of a relevant, meaningful and enjoyable, values based curriculum ...*

It is more than a year since the new coalition government announced that the proposals for the new primary curriculum from the last Labour government were being scrapped. The Cambridge Primary Review (CPR) seemed to have hit the right moment for its publication in providing an alternative vision of the curriculum built around strong educational principles. The CPR team certainly had a number of meetings with the DfE and although there was common ground in the significance of subjects in the curriculum, there is little reason currently to believe that the CPR proposals will be strongly reflected in a new curriculum framework.

(See page 16, "Where are we now?", Bob Pavard).

## Relevance & enjoyment

Having been part of the evaluation process of *Open Futures* from its inception and having also completed a number of Level 3 Quality Mark visits, there are some relevant observations to make about curriculum-making in existing *Open Futures* schools. It was very striking that in the Level 3 schools, reflecting a wider trend in *Open Futures*, that there was deep dissatisfaction with the existing primary curriculum. Headteachers and co-ordinators felt that it was not serving their pupils well. The curriculum, and remember this was under the last government, had become too transactional. It had lost meaning and relevance and enjoyment and this has impacted both on those achieving well and more severely on those who were struggling, as they routinely saw themselves as failures, with concomitant effects on motivation.

**The Curriculum is our statement as a society about our vision for children and what they might become as adults.**

Headteachers and co-ordinators had in most instances started to address this issue, by introducing more gardening or cooking or other more creative activity. *Open Futures*, however, provided a massive boost to this process and helped in four particular ways:

- 1 It accelerated these developments very rapidly as training came on stream so that more teachers and teaching assistants could develop the critical skills necessary;
- 2 Few schools were already doing growing, cooking, *Philosophy For Children (P4C)* and film-making to a significant extent, thus *Open Futures* widened the range of meaningful activity available to pupils;
- 3 *Open Futures* provided coherence in terms of the framing of their work as skills and enquiry-based learning;
- 4 Schools shared their practical knowledge of:
  - (a) how to increase the scale of the *Open Futures* strands so that they were available to all year groups on a regular basis and
  - (b) how to embed strand activities into the wider life of the school by holding restaurant nights for parents and the community, devoted to particular cuisines.

What we are seeing in many *Open Futures* schools is the flowering of a values-based curriculum. Growing and cooking are intensely meaningful human activities attuned to meeting human needs. It is no coincidence that eating meals together as a family is a strong predictor of good outcomes for children. Asking questions is the epitome of learning that represents a desire to know and a foundation for curiosity and creativity. Film-making allows pupils to tell stories, another fundamental human desire, allied to a chance for pupils to master technology (which their teachers might be struggling with). This is a heady mix and in most *Open Futures* schools it has captured the enthusiasm of staff because they can see the effect on pupils. It offers a radical alternative to what can become very mechanical literacy and numeracy sessions, which can feel like going through the motions to many pupils.

## Curriculum – What is it for?

One of the most fundamental questions about curriculum is 'what is it for?' The curriculum is our statement as a society about our vision for children and what they might become as adults. This is not a question we address every day but it is a question that should not be ignored for long either. For too long, we have shelved the question and taken a very utilitarian and short term view of the primary curriculum. It has sufficed for the aim of the curriculum to be particular percentages of children reaching benchmark standards in core subjects. There are many signs that this has many negative consequences. Whatever the result of the primary curriculum deliberations it is important for *Open Futures* schools to stick to their values.

## Professor David J K Leat

Director, Centre for Learning & Teaching  
University of Newcastle Upon Tyne

# Welcome to openit

Welcome to *openit*, the termly newspaper for the *Open Futures Network*.



The theme of *openit 3* is the Olympic Games. We are sure this will provide you and your colleagues with fresh ideas about how the games can stimulate pupils' learning across the curriculum.

This edition also contains two important articles about the potential development of Skills and Enquiry within the New National Primary Curriculum. Professor David Leat (*cover*) and Bob Pavard (*page 16*).

If you haven't registered with *Open Futures* and would like to receive future copies of *openit*, either as a newspaper for sharing in the staff room, or in electronic format to circulate to your colleagues, or both, please register your interest at: [www.openfutures.com](http://www.openfutures.com) or phone us on 01235 533131 or email us at [hello@openfutures.com](mailto:hello@openfutures.com)



## About Open Futures

**'Raising attainment through bringing learning to life'**



*Open Futures* is a skills and enquiry-based curriculum development programme, linking learning and life. It was developed and continues to be supported by the *Helen Hamlyn Trust* to help children discover and develop practical skills, personal interests and values which will contribute to their education and help to enhance their adult lives.

*Open Futures* supports the curriculum by providing inspirational contexts for learning, high quality training and teaching resources. It builds on the belief that creative reflection is essential to deep learning – whether of skills (know-how) or of facts (know what). Creative reflection and enquiry define the *Open Futures* curriculum. The programme integrates four strands that enable children:

-  To make choices and effective decisions – *askit*
-  Grow their own fruit and vegetables – *growit*
-  Cook for themselves – *cookit*
-  Work with new media to produce films – *filmit*

*Open Futures* introduces schools and children to a way of learning and teaching that fosters discovery and curiosity.

If you are interested in finding out more about how to become an *Open Futures School* or would like to hear more about the programme please phone us on 01235 533131 or email us at [hello@openfutures.com](mailto:hello@openfutures.com)

### openit

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53K – design & layout  
John Storey – editor  
Gilly Gawthorne – editorial  
Newspaper Club – printer



### The Open Futures Trust

The *Open Futures Trust* is a registered charity No 1136095



*Open Futures* was initiated and is generously supported by the Helen Hamlyn Trust

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## The Open Futures National Conference

**12 July 2012**

**Save £25 per delegate by booking before the end of February**

For more information email Anna Hodgson at [anna.hodgson@openfutures.com](mailto:anna.hodgson@openfutures.com)



## Why did my school get openit?

This might be because your school is in, or close to, **Birmingham, Hull, Manchester** or **Newham** where *Open Futures* recently launched its 2011 Curriculum Development Partnership initiative. During the next two years we will be developing the partnership schools and want to hear from you if you are interested in initiating the programme in your school.

*openit* is being made available free to selected schools in these four areas.

Currently three primary schools in each area (four in Manchester) are working intensively with the *Open Futures* team developing learning and teaching programmes, which will provide their pupils with life-enduring and life-enhancing skills. By 2013 each of these thirteen 'Partnership' schools will be an *Open Futures* Centre of Excellence.

*openit* is one of the ways we will keep you informed about *Open Futures* events and training opportunities.

To ensure you continue to receive a copy of *openit* please register via the website [www.openfutures.com](http://www.openfutures.com), or to find out more please phone us on 01235 533131 or email us at [hello@openfutures.com](mailto:hello@openfutures.com)



## Open Futures in the news

### Bearing fruit for pupils in Hull

As reported on BBC Radio Humberside's Breakfast Show on 24 November 2011

**Green-fingered children, parents and teachers at Chiltern Primary School got their hands dirty when they planted an orchard of fruit trees as part of their work towards becoming an Open Futures 'Centre of Excellence'.**

The produce from 20 trees and bushes in the new Chiltern Street school garden will be used by pupils and also generously donated to local elderly residents, who can look forward to a fresh supply of pears, apples, plums, damson, raspberries, gooseberries and blackcurrants. Through *Open Futures' growit* strand, the pupils are learning where their food comes from, how to cultivate and pick it and the skills of the gardening trade. The other three strands – *cookit*, *filmit* and *askit* – will see them cooking the food they have grown, filming their project and discussing their work.

Lynne Clarke, head teacher at Chiltern Primary, said: "The reason we decided to become an *Open Futures* school was because we are teaching in a deprived area and we are keen to link skills with thinking and reasoning across our curriculum – giving children more responsibility and involving them in purposeful activities, which *Open Futures* provides".

**"The children are learning to work cooperatively, gaining life experiences and using practical skills to learn reading, writing and maths. The whole school is taking part – over 400 pupils – and they absolutely love it."**

The school's *Open Futures* work is building on its involvement with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and its 'Get Your Grown-ups Growing' campaign. The joint event was co-



ordinated by teachers Jacqui Marshall and Paul Metcalf, with pupils inviting their parents in to help them plant the orchard.

Jacqui said: "We're trying to develop our garden, and we have picked a variety of small trees for the orchard, so the children can pick the fruit when it's ripe. And we're planting now so they will be ready by autumn, when the children are in school. This way they can take ownership of the garden; looking after it and tending to it.

"We will be using the produce for the Harvest Festival in 2012 and giving it to the local elderly residents. We'll be using the plums and apples for the *cookit* strand of *Open Futures* and we also plan to film our work for *filmit*."

**The school's green credentials have seen it achieve the RHS Campaign for School Gardening Benchmark Level 4. Taking part in *Open Futures* is supporting the school to work towards the next and highest level with the campaign.**

RHS's Regional Advisor and *Open Futures growit* trainer for school gardening in Yorkshire and Humber is John Hickling. He said: "I am absolutely delighted by the way the school is involving itself in the whole *Open Futures* programme. The staff, children and parents are all enthusiastic about growing their own produce and are looking forward to cooking and eating it. They are all getting a great deal from it."

*Open Futures in the News* is a regular column in *openit*. If any *Open Futures* activity in your school has been reported in the National or Local Press, please let us know and we will print it here.

### Foundry flying start

Nick Chandley reflects on the success of an *askit* training course in Foundry Primary School in Birmingham

**The sounds of children thinking and talking together like the founders of philosophy can now be heard in Foundry Primary, one of the thirteen new Open Futures Partnership Schools.**

#### Power to transform

Ingrid Hines, Foundry's Headteacher, was keen to see how the *askit* approach could make a difference for her pupils so the whole school embarked on the two-day introductory course in enquiry-based learning. This is based on the work of Matthew Lipman and the philosophy for children methodology he developed in an attempt to encourage children to think not only critically and creatively but also in a caring and collaborative way. They learn to ask better questions, listen and respond to other people, build on the views of others and give good reasons to support their own. Through this, a strong sense of community builds in the classroom, where individuals respect each other and reflect on the things that matter to them. All-in-all, a truly child-centred dialogic strategy that has the power to transform.

The *askit* approach is certainly refreshingly different. "At first I thought *askit* would be simply about asking questions to a framework. After having done the training I realise that

it is more of training for independent thought. It gives an individual's thought expression validity." Winsome Thomas – teacher Year 5/6.

#### Deep thinkers

Staff were very positive by the end of the course and more than ready to get started. In fact, some already had in the gap between the first day of training and the second. Ingrid was keen to capitalise on this enthusiasm by booking a support day soon after the course to allow teachers and assistants to observe sessions of philosophical enquiry, with a staff meeting at the end of the day to unpack the observations. Ingrid was in no doubt about the impact on the children. "We learnt a great deal and enjoyed the *askit* training as a staff together but I felt very proud when I saw the depth of thought our own children in school were capable of when Nick came into school and carried out enquiries with children from the Nursery to Year 6. All the staff were inspired and surprised at what the children were capable of, when given a chance." Susan Frankish, deputy head and Year 1 teacher, agrees, saying that the children have responded really well to *askit* and are becoming deeper thinkers.

#### Great teaching

But what about the children? Lenaya says 'I think philosophy for kids is great because it's a great way for everyone to join in' and Olivia agrees – "I think Philosophy is good because

everyone gets heard and they can share their ideas." Certainly all the children seemed to enjoy it on the support day and were probably unaware of the essential skills they were developing along the way. In Nursery, for example, the children listened to each other, took turns to speak, made choices and supported these choices with reasons. This didn't just happen though and was certainly the result of both a commitment to *askit* and, quite simply, great teaching.

#### Improved attitude

Many teachers say that *askit* training makes them reflect on their own practice too. Sarah Mills, Drama teacher at Foundry, says that it helped her to examine her use of questioning in the classroom, such a crucial aspect of teaching and yet easily overlooked as a significant contributor to improved attitude and attainment.

Suffice to say, the *askit* foundation is now firmly laid at Foundry Primary. It takes very little time for the results to be seen – sometimes after the very first session – and having seen first-hand at Foundry how children of widely differing abilities and from such diverse backgrounds can come together as one in philosophical dialogue; I'm sure there's plenty more to come!

**Nick Chandley**  
*askit* Trainer



# askit Olympics

**askit** Trainer, Nick Chandley goes for Gold in synchronised philosophical dialogue...

**I can't imagine many places across the country that'll avoid Olympics fever at some point this year. I was listening to Radio Sheffield the other day and already they're interviewing local potential candidates for squads that might bring some attention to the city and, no doubt, that will be happening in your area too. I was never in the running for any Olympic sport but maybe if synchronised philosophical dialogue (preferably out of the pool but philosophers can't be choosers) came along I might be in with a chance.**

### The Olympic Park

I've been working in some London schools over the last year and have often driven past the Olympic Park. It's a huge site and although the budget for the games seems immense, it becomes easier to see how it mounts up with you see the park for yourself.

That won't be possible for many of us but we can get an idea by visiting the London 2012 website ([www.london2012.com](http://www.london2012.com)) and browsing to the webcam page. There we'll find pictures from around the site but the most interesting one for me is 'Olympic Park viewed from South to North', as that has a 'progress to date' option that shows how the park has developed over time.

**The games originated in ancient Greece and would have been a feature of life around the time Socrates and many of his contemporaries were laying the foundations for Western philosophy.**

### Olympic askit

There's obviously great potential for Olympic links in pretty much every subject in the primary curriculum and I've no doubt that most of you will have already been turning your mind to Olympic Maths, Olympic Literacy and, not least, Olympic PE. Maybe though, we should also be looking at Olympic *askit*, particularly as the games originated in ancient Greece and would have been a feature of life around the time Socrates and many of his contemporaries were laying the foundations for Western philosophy.

We'll be looking in some detail at ways we can do this in the *askit* forum on the *Open Futures* website, but here are a few thoughts to be going on with.

There's an interesting article on the BBC News website (the article can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/7b4zfwl>) on the Olympic 2012 logo. The article says that the aim of the logo's designers, Wolff Olins, was to 'create a palette of colours, lines and shapes that create energy, inspiration and interest.'



Questions I might ask of the children could be:

- Is the logo interesting?  
If so, in what way?
- Have the designers succeeded in creating energy?  
If so, how?
- Is it possible to create energy from a picture?  
If so, what kind of energy might it create?
- Is the logo worth the money spent on it?
- Would you say the logo is a work of art?  
If so, why?  
If not, what makes something a work of art?

### The concept of winning

Needless to say, there's a lot of potential for follow up in a range of subjects from such an enquiry – plenty of shape work in maths, posters/adverts/persuasive writing in literacy, etc, but there's little doubt that the follow up will be all the richer following some time spent focussed on the logo and the concepts surrounding it in an *askit* community of enquiry.

In such an atmosphere of striving to be the best, we might also enquire into the concept of winning. Footage



## Did you know?

The athletes in the original Olympic Games all competed in the nude?  
The word gymnasium has its roots in gymnos, meaning 'naked'.





## Did you know?

The Greek philosopher Xenaphanes (c570 – c475BC), after studying fossils of seashells at the top of mountains, hypothesised that water must have covered the area at some time. Although this makes sense to us now, it wasn't until 2,300 years later that this theory was accepted, when proposed by the Scottish geologist James Hutton. Another example of the Greeks getting there first!

of a winning ceremony could be shown (there are lots on YouTube, for example) and the children could generate a range of questions it inspires them to ask. Ones I might have in my back pocket, ready to inject a little spark into the enquiry, should it be necessary, are:

- Is winning the only aim of participating in the Olympic Games?
- Is winning all about coming first?
- Is the winner always the best?
- Is there anything the same about the person who wins and the person who comes last?
- Would you say the person who comes second in a race has 'lost' the race?
- Is it always best to win?  
Is it ever best NOT to win?

### Odd one out

Each of the disciplines bring with them equal potential too. You might ask the children to pick three sports (from a hat maybe) and then ask them to decide which is the odd one out. This would be a good opener to an enquiry, especially one with an Olympic theme as the stimulus and especially if you ask them to work in pairs. The kind of dialogue that this activity encourages is of a high order as the children discuss, compare and contrast the attributes of each before making a decision based on their conclusions.

I'm really excited at the prospect of working on the Olympic Games with all our *Open Futures* Schools and I can't wait to see the ideas cropping up in the *askit* forum. These games offer us such a great opportunity to encourage our children to reflect on their own lives through thinking collaboratively with their peers, but then that's the power of *askit* – *thinking together to make more sense of the world we live in.*

Now, where did I put my goggles and nose clip... ?

If you or your pupils have any more interesting Olympic "Did you know?" send them to us and we will print the best in **openit 4**.

## Thinkers' thoughts



Here are some thought provoking quotes from seven well known thinkers and also Rosie, 10 years old and not yet as well known, or as old, as the others.

- 1 We can't all do everything.
- 2 To know what people really think, pay regard to what they do, rather than what they say.
- 3 A person that does good to another also does good to themselves.
- 4 If people never did silly things nothing intelligent would ever get done.
- 5 Only the educated are free.
- 6 There is nothing so silly that some philosopher has not already said it.
- 7 No one can think nothing, but anyone can think about it.
- 8 A person who learns but does not think, is lost! One who thinks but does not learn is in great danger.

### Can you identify who said what?!

The Thinkers are:

Cicero	Descartes	Rosie	Virgil
Confucius	Epictetus	Seneca	Wittgenstein

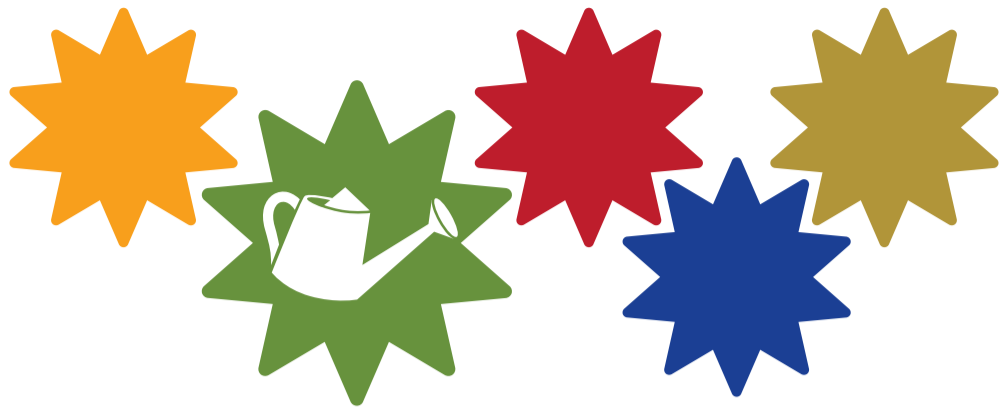
If you don't have much time just try to spot Rosie's quote.

Answers can be found at the bottom of Page 11

If you have some interesting quotes from young thinkers please send them to:  
[john.storey@openfutures.com](mailto:john.storey@openfutures.com)

We will print a selection in the next edition of **openit**.





# growit Olympics

Anne Gunning, *growit* Trainer explains the links between the biggest sporting event on earth and growing vegetables...

**Runner beans, Strawberry runners, Willow hurdles – there are lots of tenuous links between vegetables and the Olympic Games! One Head said to me at our first meeting, ‘I don’t do tenuous links’ so here are some strong ideas for celebrating the biggest Sporting Event on earth.**



(Photo courtesy of Rob Beer)

## Planting up the Olympic rings

Use tyres or containers planted with flowers related to the colours of the rings or if you have an area of ground, plant up coloured circles. Suggested plants are:

- Blue** Borage  
or Blue Pansy/Violas
- Yellow** Nasturtium ‘Lady Bird’
- Black** Nasturtium ‘Black Velvet’  
or Viola ‘Black Delight’
- Green** Nasturtium with flowers removed  
or lettuce
- Red** Nasturtium ‘Empress of India’

Apart from the pansies and violas all these can be purchased as seeds and sown directly outside into containers or the ground in late March. Nasturtium leaves and flowers are also edible and are cheap and



What a lovely photograph to promote the school’s sustainability and creativity and a good opportunity for press coverage. (Photo courtesy of BCGI)



Nasturtiums come in many colours and flowers and leaves are edible. (Photo courtesy of RHS)

easy to grow. Blue pansies will be available from garden centres as will red and white ones that can also be used as part of a red, white and blue planting scheme – an alternative patriotic colour scheme to support Team GB or celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee.





### Food for athletes

Growing and cooking healthy foods can be linked to sporting performance. Scientists at Exeter University found that drinking 500ml of Beetroot juice every day boosted the stamina of athletes by 16%. Beetroot is a very easy to grow, quick maturing crop. Sow directly into pots or beds from the end of March and they will be ready to juice within 10 weeks. A good variety to try for early sowings is Beetroot 'Boltardy'. For something a bit different try sowing Beetroot 'Burpee's Golden' which is golden yellow inside and does not stain your fingers.



Scientists at Exeter University found that drinking 500ml of Beetroot juice everyday boosted the stamina of athletes by 16%.

Beetroot 'Boltardy' – As well as the root being edible, the leaves make a tasty addition to salads. (Photo courtesy of RHS)

### Create a botanical wreath fit for an athlete

The relationship between sports and plant life began with the Olympic Games over 2,700 years ago in ancient Greece by the crowning of the winning athletes using olive branches. The olive tree (*Olea europaea*) was considered sacred and symbolized peace and victory. Native to the Mediterranean Basin, the olive was important for nutrition and health, and was valued economically.

'Plant Champions' is an inspiring international competition that showcases the importance of plants around the world. 11-19 year olds are invited to research their native plants and create a wreath.

For details of how to enter see [www.bgci.org/education/fair2/](http://www.bgci.org/education/fair2/)

Alternatively you can create a simple floral head band by sticking or stapling greenery and flowers picked by the children (under supervision) to a cardboard head band or tying into a wire circle.



There are a wide range of sunflowers (above left) to choose from. Pot marigolds (above right) are also easy to grow. (Photos courtesy of RHS)

### A 'vegetable' Olympic Games

What about sports day with a vegetable theme? Relay race with cucumber or carrot as a baton, potato and spoon race, shot put with a turnip/onion, Turnip bowls, and a bag of peas or rice under the chin race rather than a bean bag.

And for the winners a stick of celery! In ancient Greece, celery was highly valued and it was awarded as a prize to winners in many of their sport contests.

### Cut your own bouquet

At the early Olympics in ancient Greece all winners were presented with flowers or foliage usually chosen for their symbolic meaning.

London is the first summer Host City to embed sustainability in its planning from the start. *The Telegraph* recently reported that officials were proposing to present athletes with pots of plants containing native flowers rather than tropical flowers flown in from abroad. You may already have 'Grow your own' vegetable beds but what about creating a 'Cut your own' bed? Cut flower posies can be a way of generating income as well as a way of studying the environmental impact of

importing tropical cut flowers. If you can designate an area of ground or a collection of pots to cut flowers try growing these easy annuals from seed:

- Sunflowers – Dwarf varieties which branch such as 'Irish eyes'
- Cosmos
- Pot marigolds (*Calendula officinalis*)
- Cornflowers

Other Plants suitable for cutting :

- Ox eye daisy – native wild flower can be grown in grassy areas
- Daffodils and Tulips can be planted next Autumn for the following Spring
- Twisted hazel and willow
- Eucalyptus kept pruned regularly to encourage new young shoots
- Evergreen shrubs for back ground greenery

The Olympics is all about being the best whether that be a winner, team mate, role model or graceful loser.

We could always revert back to that gardening competition stalwart – grow the tallest sunflower – or is that too much of a tenuous link?...

Ox-eye daisy (below) can be planted in the lawn where the grass is allowed to grow tall. It will tolerate mowing after flowering. (Photo courtesy of RHS)







# cookit Olympics

cookit Trainers, Ann Kerry & Sandra Rayner think 2012 is a good time to learn more about how a good diet and exercise is a winning combination for all of us ...

## Sport & nutrition

### Olympic competitors

Stories are often in the news about a new study that links illnesses to the food we eat along with a lack of exercise. With the London Olympics 2012 on the horizon it is a good time to learn more about a 'good' diet and exercise. We may not become Olympic competitors, but if we can get our pupils to think about what they eat, we can give them a good basis for the 'race for life'.

Our Government also hopes that having the 2012 Olympics in Britain will encourage the population to take more exercise. The evidence based on sound research indicates that everyone should take some exercise each day. Research also indicates that children are currently taking less exercise.

Many schools have plans to organise a mini Olympics for their school and in doing so get their pupils more active. This may encourage a life-long interest in one or more specific sport.

Food and a carefully balanced diet have always played an important part of the life for athletes. In fact Keroibos from Elis, the winner of the running race 'The Stadion' at the first recorded Olympics in 776 BC was a cook.

### The Mediterranean diet

In ancient Greece the diet of the people consisted of breads, vegetables and fruits. These are still the mainstay of the Mediterranean Diet. This eating pattern has been linked to the low rate of heart disease in the region. In ancient times the most common protein eaten was fish as it was easy to access and there was an abundance of fish in the Mediterranean.

The main features of the diet are whole fruits, vegetables, breads and other whole grain products in addition to potatoes, beans, nuts and seeds. Olives

and olive oil are consumed regularly in cooking and at the table, the benefit of which is that it is a mono-unsaturated fat and does not have the heart disease related properties associated with saturated fats – generally animal fats. Dairy products, poultry and fish are consumed in moderate quantities along with small quantities of red meat. Eggs are generally consumed 2-4 times per week.

In this diet there is a minimal amount of refined sugar product which, although they are energy dense they are also poor in nutrients. They do give a quick energy boost, but their energy is not released over a period of time, that carbohydrate foods such as pasta, potatoes and



bread would do. A piece of fruit, which contains natural sugars, is a better food to eat just before you start to compete. This is the reason you often see bananas being eaten during games at Wimbledon.

### Packed lunches

Meals should not be eaten just before a sporting event. Carbohydrate generally takes the body 1 to 4 hours to digest, depending upon what and how much has been eaten. Ensuring that foods containing B vitamins, particularly B12 are consumed alongside carbohydrates helps to release energy. B vitamins are found in fish, meat, eggs and dairy produce.

No two people are the same, so different foods should be tried prior to an event to determine the most suitable for each individual.

Athletes should also be hydrated before beginning exercise and should also drink enough fluid during and after exercise to balance fluid loss.

Packed lunches brought into school can help to form a starting point. Older pupils could plan a packed lunch for "an Olympic competitor in the making". A couscous based recipe is a good start, it can be eaten warm or cold and a variety of additional ingredients can be added to suit individual taste. A small amount of protein in the form of cold chicken, a little cheese or fish makes it a balanced and interesting choice. Cold pasta can also be the base of a lunch box dish. Add a piece of fruit and a water based drink and this will form a good balanced meal.

## An Olympics cooking day

Perhaps the easiest and most fun way to celebrate the Olympics in 2012 is to cook dishes that come from different culinary cultures. We have a bank of recipes that can help you to do this and the easiest way for you to access them is to contact us using the online community links to the cookit forum. We can post an appropriate recipe on the forum. Your ideas might spark someone else to try a new recipe and you might find inspiration yourself!

**The winner of the running race 'The Stadion' at the first recorded Olympics in 776 BC was a cook.**



### African cuisine

Another way to approach this is to look at a key ingredient from the different countries that are represented and cook something using that ingredient. This is sometimes easier, especially with the African cuisine. For example, Kale is grown and eaten in a lot of African countries and is easily accessible in our supermarkets. You could take the Colcannon Cakes recipe and replace the cabbage with some cooked Kale; a food the children will recognise but may not have tasted before.

Alternatively, the same recipe could be adapted using Winter Spinach or Swiss Chard. Many of you grow these in your schools' gardens and they are similar in appearance and texture to "Lachana" a vegetable grown in Greece and Cyprus, the originator of the Olympic Games. A lot of maize is grown in Africa and the Americas; you can look at the corn in its natural form as a cob and then use it in the tinned or frozen form in a lot of recipes.



### Food for competitors

How about a "Cook the Olympics" day, all classes contributing a food from another culture and then having a school picnic, trying the different dishes? If you are feeling up to the challenge perhaps you could cook for parents and run an Olympic Café.

Consider foods appropriate for the athletes and competitors, but also think about food for the spectators: hot food, cold food, hand-held items, meals, snacks, not forgetting seasonal food and care for the environment.

**If you are lucky enough to work in a multi-cultural school, perhaps parents could be encouraged to cook some of their national dishes and bring them into school for a tasting evening.**

Please get in touch with us if we can help you to develop any ideas you have.

**Ann Kerry & Sandra Rayner**  
hello@opentures.com

## Olympic recipe



cook it

Recipe

### Sunset pasta salad

This recipe serves 3 - 4.

#### Ingredients

- 100g Dried pasta shapes
- 3 Tablespoons sunflower oil
- 1 Dessertspoon red or white wine vinegar
- 1 Dessertspoon tomato ketchup
- 1 Small carrot – peeled and grated
- 1/2 Red pepper – de-seeded, sliced and diced
- 1/2 Small cucumber – cut into sticks and diced
- 6 Cherry tomatoes – quartered
- 100g Cheese of your choice – diced

Alternative optional extras:

- 2 Tablespoon canned sweetcorn – drained
- 2 Sticks celery – thinly sliced
- 1 Beetroot – cooked and diced
- 1 Apple or pear – cored and diced and coated in lemon juice to prevent browning
- 1 Tablespoon dried fruit such as sultanas, raisins, apricots

Or replace the cheese with:

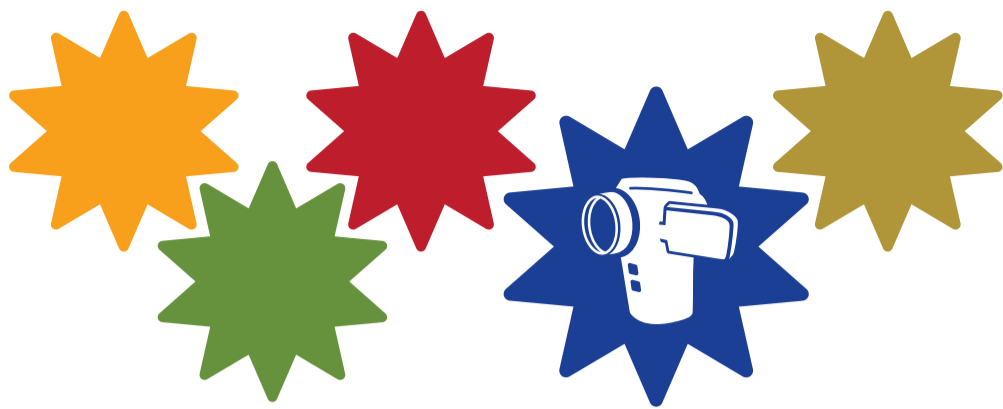
- 75g Cold cooked meat such as ham or chicken – diced
- 75g Cold cooked fish such as salmon or mackerel – flaked
- 25g Nuts such as cashew or pecan – roughly chopped

#### Equipment

- Saucepan
- Sieve
- Mixing bowl
- Chopping board
- Sharp knife
- Tablespoon
- Kitchen roll
- Serving dish

#### How to make it

- 1 Cook the pasta in fast-boiling water until just tender but with 'bite' (al dente). Mix the oil, ketchup and vinegar in the bowl.
- 2 Prepare the vegetables and add them all, except the tomatoes – to the sunflower oil, ketchup and vinegar. Add the cheese and toss the ingredients together.
- 3 Drain the pasta and plunge it into cold water. Drain it again and pat dry with kitchen roll.
- 4 Add the pasta to the vegetable and cheese mixture, and stir to combine.
- 5 Turn the pasta into a serving dish and decorate with the quartered cherry tomatoes. Serve immediately.



# filmit Olympics

**filmit Trainer, Denise Evans does cartwheels to demonstrate how filming can help pupils improve their sporting skills ...**

## Floor routines for the Olympics

The Olympic Games is a major international event in which thousands of athletes participate in a variety of competitions. London is just about ready to put on a great Olympic show and athletes are preparing. They have to practice rigorously to perfect their skills and techniques.

They have learned that perseverance and commitment are necessary characteristics of a champion.

'Fine' and 'gross' motor skills are important for any athlete. 'Fine' motor skills involve intricate movements using small muscle groups, tend to be precise and generally involve high levels of hand-eye co-ordination. 'Gross' motor skills involve walking, maintaining balance, co-ordination, throwing, jumping and reaching.

How can children perfect their fine and gross motor skills? Children learn sporting skills through visual, auditory and kinaesthetic styles.

Filming can aid children in their aim to perfect their skills. By filming a sporting activity and using a bit of creativity in their editing, children will soon realise that filming can aid their developing techniques. Once film has been captured and downloaded to the computer, this is where the fun begins!

## Audience & purpose

Software, such as Pinnacle and Movie Maker, will allow you to slow down your edited clips and become a powerful tool. Movement played back in slow motion allows you to pinpoint any imperfections in the movement and so assist in improving it. By watching the film, children will be able to break down their movements and establish at what point their skill needs practice. Watching their film is a great motivator to practice. Children can then be filmed at different stages of their development and film can be downloaded again, slowed down and compared with previous footage.

Children are often asked "Why are you making this film and who is it for?" Audience and purpose is soon realised when applied to their sporting skills such as learning how to do cartwheels.

## Slowing down

Starting points might be getting the children to first watch professional gymnastics such as Beth Tweddle, Britain's first-ever world champion gymnast, doing her floor routine.

Go to: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/gymnastics-floor-exercises/6272.html>

You will see Beth doing cartwheels as part of her floor routine.

Get the children to watch and listen to instructions on how to do a cartwheel and try them out themselves. The filming of their attempts and the slowing down of their movements once the film is downloaded will act as a motivator and soon reveal where they are going wrong and where improvements need to be made.

**By filming a sporting activity and using a bit of creativity in their editing, children will soon realise that filming can aid their development techniques.**



## How to do a cartwheel

### Step 1

#### Starting position – stand up straight and tall

- Point one leg out making sure toes are pointing on the floor
- Raise your arms above your head, pointing your fingers to the sky; making a straight line from your fingers to your toes

### Step 2

#### Getting into the handstand position

- Bend down and turn your shoulder nearest to your front leg that is pointed and push
- Push off with your front leg and kick with your back leg
- Once in a handstand position split your legs

### Step 3

#### Landing the cartwheel

- Turn your hips to the direction from where you started
- Land on the ground one foot at a time
- Stand up straight and tall in the same position as you started

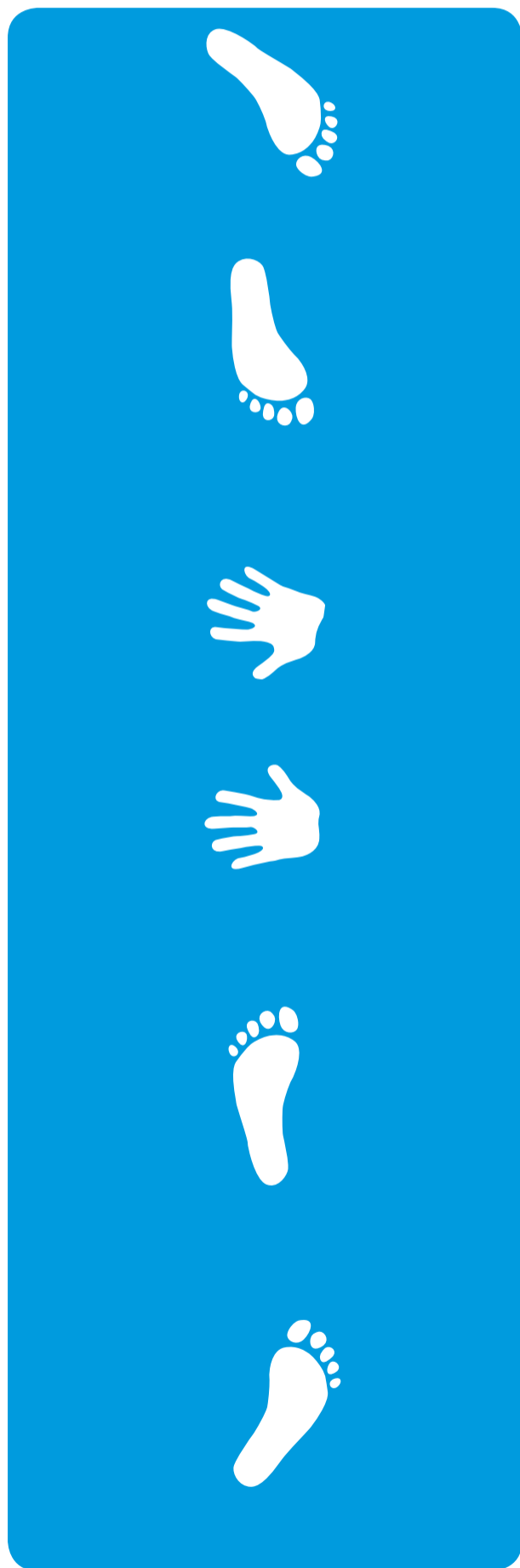
To practice your handstand you can use a special mat for cartwheels, like the one illustrated on the right, which will guide you where to place your hands and feet.

Children can use instructional films or their own slowed down films alongside a check list such as above, to see if their movements match. Most of all, children will be having fun using film as a tool to both motivate them and improve their 'fine' and 'gross' motor skills.





Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) is a regular feature in *openit*. If you have questions let us know and we will answer all of them in *openit* or on the Online Learning Community.



Search the BBC Learning Zone website for gymnastics-floor-exercises.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### How do I get started with *filmit*?

Denise Evans, *filmit* Trainer, offers some advice ...

The *filmit* strand can seem quite daunting at first, from picking up a digital video camera; capturing footage; to editing it to share with your chosen audience. However, film-making goes much further than this. It's all about process and progression.

It's always best to start with your strengths and what better way than to start with digital stills images to gain confidence and competence and get hooked into the whole *filmit* progression. Digital stills is such a powerful medium with a vital storytelling role. A photograph can represent numerous things including an icon, an idea, a memory, an emotion, a fear or an aspiration.

#### The power to choose

Printing digital stills images for children to handle can form the bedrock of visual storytelling, focusing on linear stories. Children live in a world of stories and are forever weaving them into their play. Allow the children the power to choose which images and when they are seen by arranging them on the desk to tell their own story, talking about their experiences.

Children then progress onto PowerPoint Photo Album. It is very quick to download images into the album which can be displayed on an interactive whiteboard in the 'slide sorter' view. Children can physically drag photographs into a chosen order to tell their own stories. By adding verbal narration, this allows understanding of how a captured moment in time supports their vision.

#### Commanding the audience

From PowerPoint children progress to PhotoStory (a free download) using their digital images to create credible stories, making alternative versions by rearranging images. Children quickly learn that images are still editable after the camera trigger is pressed by using different effects such as 'black and white', 'sepia', 'water colour'. They can add text by overlaying words onto the image; voice-overs using microphones such as the EasiSpeak microphone and music from the Audio Music Site (<http://audio.lgfl.org.uk>). The storyteller is commanding the audience by customising the motion to focus on a particular

Children live in a world of stories and are forever weaving them into their play.

aspect of the image, revealing certain parts of the image as the story unfolds or simply providing a more interesting view. PhotoStory makes it incredibly easy to pan and zoom and add transitions from one image to the next to give the feeling of a passage of time.

PhotoStory fits as a cross curricular tool and finished films can be shared on the *Open Futures filmit* website once they are converted using Windows Movie Maker 2.6. in a few simple steps. Just import the created PhotoStory Windows Media video into Windows Movie Maker and then finish the movie saving it to your computer. This converted movie will now be ready to share on the *Open Futures filmit* website.

#### Understanding and confidence

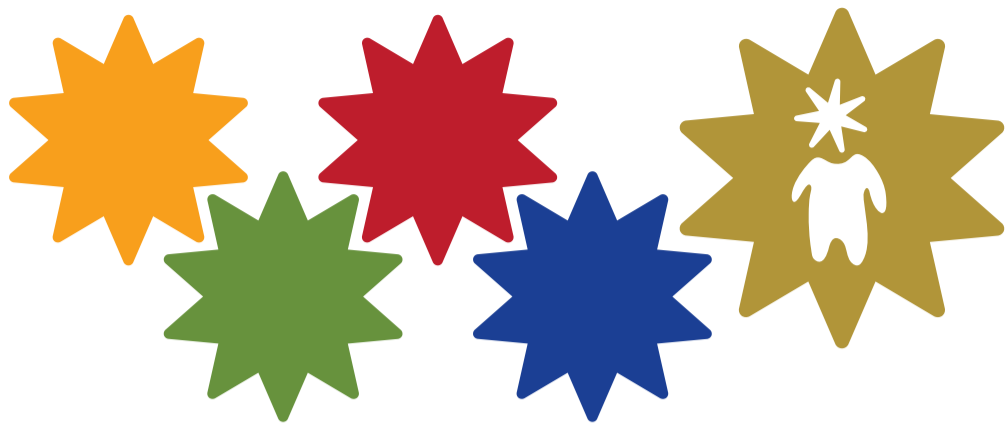
The creation of digital video provides a real purpose for the pupils' as part of *Open Futures filmit*. *filmit* is an ideal tool as part of *growit*, *cookit* and *askit* as well as a cross-curricular tool. Pupils watching films and sharing their comments contributes to audience and purpose. Children will progress to digital video editing naturally and with understanding and confidence having experienced the progressive use of digital stills images.

PhotoStory makes it incredibly easy to pan and zoom and add transitions from one image to the next to give the feeling of a passage of time.

### Thinkers' Thoughts – from page 5

#### Answers

- 1 We can't all do everything. (*Virgil*)
- 2 To know what people really think, pay regard to what they do, rather than what they say. (*Descartes*)
- 3 A person that does good to another also does good to themselves. (*Seneca*)
- 4 If people never did silly things nothing intelligent would ever get done. (*Wittgenstein*)
- 5 Only the educated are free. (*Epictetus*)
- 6 There is nothing so silly that some philosopher has not already said it. (*Cicero*)
- 7 No one can think nothing, but anyone can think about it. (*Rosie, aged 10*)
- 8 A person who learns but does not think, is lost! One who thinks but does not learn is in great danger. (*Confucius*)



# Open Futures People

**Open Futures People** is a regular feature in *openit*

## Number one – The coordinator's tale

**Open Futures Curriculum Consultant Sue Macleod visits Oyster Park Primary School Castleford to meet with Head-teacher, MANDY REATHER (right) and the Open Futures Coordinator CAROLE SHARP (left).**



Thanks for agreeing to talk to *openit* Mandy and Carole. Let's start at the beginning, when did you first hear about *Open Futures* and what prompted you to find out more?

It was in September 2008 when lots of Wakefield schools joined *Open Futures*. We were aware that *Open Futures* matched our philosophy of 'real learning' but sadly at this time the budget at the infant school did not allow us to subscribe. However we kept in touch through the website and

through discussions with staff in other schools. We attempted to dip our toes in the water doing cooking and growing activities in school.

**What persuaded you and your Governors to become an *Open Futures* school?**

We felt that since we were to amalgamate with the Junior School and become one large Primary school *Open Futures* would give us our first 'Whole School Initiative' this would bring us together as a school. It fitted very well with the type of learning staff in both schools had told us they would like children to experience.

**What do you want to achieve for your children by supporting and embedding *Open Futures* across your curriculum?**

All of us realise the importance of social skills and speaking and listening skills for our children. *Open Futures* appeals to all different types of learners and is accessible to all Pupils. We also realise the importance of children in Oyster Park making as many 'connections' between different areas of the curriculum as possible. *Open Futures* helps support and extend children's learning. It develops their understanding of the relevance of what they are doing and learning – not just what? but also why?

In addition, *Open Futures* provides a context for developing life skills that many of our children do not acquire through their daily routine. By structuring a curriculum which promotes debate as a positive and natural aspect of life, some of the stereotypical views that many of our children have may be challenged and may even be broken!

**How is the programme helping to change things in your school? What impact is it having on learning and teaching?**

In many ways, a few examples are:

Our younger children have seen their hard work (growing selections of bought seeds and their recycling of sweet pepper seeds used in cooking sessions) rewarded with a '1st in show' award at the Great Yorkshire Show 2011



The Winner! "1st in Show Award" at the Great Yorkshire Show


***Open Futures* helps support and extend children's learning. It develops their understanding of the relevance of what they are doing and learning.**

Weekly *cookit* sessions linked to curriculum themes take place using seasonal products wherever possible. A Year 2 Yorkshire theme is based on the famous Betty's Tea Rooms in Harrogate. This is the first year of delivering cooking in this way and staff will shortly discuss and evaluate the impact and make appropriate changes as needed.




All year groups have experienced *askit* sessions, younger children use props such as books to support discussions. Staff agreed a list of repeated refrains and common language to use during sessions. We also refer to the expectations of common courtesy during *askit* discussions to help establish a warm and open climate for sharing of thoughts.

**What is the reaction of different members of your school community?**

 Governors were informed about *Open Futures* through a Governors meeting and they have been invited to join in with *askit* Sessions. They also supported the initiative by agreeing to fund the *cookit* training for support staff and also increasing the equipment for this area in school.

Children were asked what aspects of the curriculum they liked best. Cooking, gardening, sport and ICT came out on top. When they were asked if they wanted to continue to develop their skills in these areas it was a resounding ‘YES!’

**What is your vision for *Open Futures* within your school – where would you like to be within, say, 5 years? 10 years?**

 Being able to see the early skills that are developing in Foundation Stage and lower Key Stage 1 gradually coming to the fore as these children move into Key Stage 2.

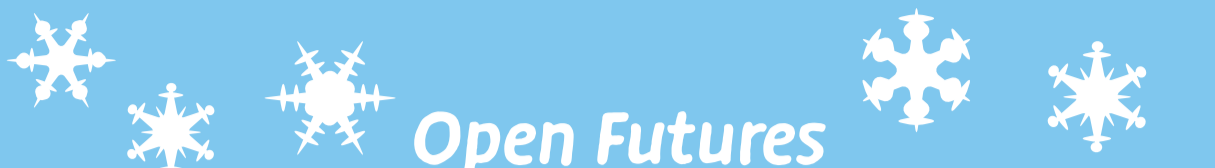
Children who are able to articulate themselves with more confidence and empathy and being able to see themselves as part of not just our school community, but of the community of the world as a whole.



Children are able to articulate themselves with more confidence and empathy.

However our overarching vision and clearest aim for the future is having a school environment where the four strands of *Open Futures* merge seamlessly to provide a balanced and relevant curriculum which motivates and enables all pupils (and their families) to achieve their best.

Thanks Mandy and Carole

 **Open Futures**  
**Christmas photography competition**

You may all remember that in the run up to Christmas we ran a Photographic Competition to find our *Open Futures* Christmas e-card. *Open Futures* Curriculum Consultant Bob Pavard found out what happened next...

**Covent Garden**

When six year old Hazel Tovey was given a camera for Christmas 2010, she immediately set to work taking “loads of photos”. Little did she, or anyone else in her family, realise that almost one year later Hazel’s photo of the Christmas tree would lead to them all enjoying the first performance in the 2011 Christmas season of the Royal Ballet’s famous production of Tchaikovsky’s *The Nutcracker*. The tickets were generously provided by the Helen Hamlyn Trust and the Royal Opera House.

**Backstage**

Hazel has been taking ballet lessons for two and a half years, in which time she has passed her pre-prep and pre-Grade 1 exams and, very recently, won a place in the regional semi-finals of the British Arts’ competition that will take place in March. She knew the story of *The Nutcracker* well from her DVD and book, but had never been to see a ballet. Thinking that the competition was only open to children at Petersgate Infants, where Hazel is a Y2 pupil, she decided to enter, using her Christmas tree photo as the basis of her design.

Hazel recalls “*feeling so excited that I almost burst*” when she received the e-mail informing her that she had won the competition; she and her family were invited to London for the day to have lunch with Lady Hamlyn, to visit backstage at the Royal Ballet and to attend the first performance of the 2011 season.



**Costumes**

“*Amazing!*” is how Hazel now describes the day, recalling especially how she was able to try on some of the costumes, including one for an adult dancer with the same waste size as Hazel! She and her 4 year-old sister Poppy were able to try out some of the props, including a trick dagger used in *Romeo & Juliet*. Hazel was able to play a 300 year-old violin and the whole family watched the scenery changes between acts.

Hazel sums up how she feels about the whole experience – “*It was just fabulous!*”

Many thanks to the Helen Hamlyn Trust and the Royal Opera House for making this possible.

Look out for more *Open Futures* Creative Competitions. Pupils in your school could be the next to experience a unique, exciting event.



# Patch from scratch

*growit* Trainer, Anne Gunning, finds ways of overcoming problems you may face when creating a new garden...

Setting up a garden from scratch can be quite daunting, particularly for the member of staff who has full responsibility for the project. There are two options – create a system of permanent beds on bare soil or tarmac (Plot) or grow in movable containers (Pots).

## Creating a plot

Typical allotment sites have large expanses of ground with narrow paths around the edges. Although a very productive use of land there are a few drawbacks if this layout is used in school grounds. Plots like these are wide, so children will have to walk on the soil to reach the middle of the bed when sowing seeds and harvesting, which can spoil the work which they have done cultivating the soil. They can trample young seedlings and if the soil is 'heavy' (clay) it can become compacted, squeezing all the air out of the soil.



Plot showing wide beds which create muddy shoes and result in damage to the soil structure. (Photo by Anne Gunning RHS)

There is no reason why beds cannot be dug at ground level as long as you consider the width of these beds and the paths around them. This way of laying out the plot is called 'The Bed System'. Beds are created which are no wider than 1.2 metres (Maybe narrower for younger children) so that the middle of the bed can be reached from both sides without treading on the soil. These beds can be many shapes and heights as long as the middle can be reached. Around these beds are permanent paths which can be mown grass, bark chippings or paving.



Plot showing easily accessed beds. (Photo by Anne Gunning RHS)

## Advantages of 'The Bed System' plot

If you are lucky enough to have an area of land where plants can be put straight into the ground, then an area with a few beds is preferred to planting in pots for the following reasons:

- Defines the growing space from paths
- Allows children to garden from the paths, keeping them clean and stopping them trampling on soil and crops
- Beds can be shared out across the school by class or topics
- Improves soil drainage, depth and warmth
- Easier maintenance
- Beds can be weeded, planted and harvested even on rainy days by working from paths
- Crop rotation is simple to practice and easy to plan
- Easy to protect crops with netting and fleece
- Earlier cropping as the soil warms up earlier in Spring
- Children can dig into the earth and learn about different soil cultivation techniques, search for creatures such as worms and experience a range of cultivation tools
- Plots remain moist for longer, particularly if a mulch is applied
- Slow release fertilisers or decomposed organic matter can easily be applied to the soil surface to feed the crops
- Beds can be made which are different heights so that vegetables which prefer deep soil such as carrots and parsnips can be grown in raised beds and crops which prefer more moisture such as lettuce and pumpkins can be grown at ground level

## The downside of 'The Bed System' plot

Developing a plot from scratch is costly and labour intensive. If the area is covered in turf this will need to be removed and then the ground underneath dug over and any tenacious weeds removed.

Even beds created at ground level will benefit from a timber edging (like a picture frame) as this will help to keep the shape of the bed and separate soil from paths. Raised beds can be constructed and placed on the ground without digging the plot – additional top soil and compost will have to be purchased, mixed and barrowed to the plot to fill these beds.

## Case Study

St John Baptist Primary School,  
West Sussex



Construction of beds.



Fill with a mixture of top soil and compost.



A flourishing plot.



### Building a plot on tarmac

Schools in urban settings often have limited outdoor space and the whole outside area may be laid to tarmac. There is no reason why a plot cannot be constructed on a hard surface as demonstrated by:

#### Case Study

#### Bannockburn Primary School, London

In the Winter of 2010/2011 this plot was constructed by the teaching assistants who built the frameworks as part of a garden build day which was a substitute for



a staff training day. The total cost for materials including growing medium for 6 beds was £700.

The only thing which differs when building a plot on tarmac is the depth of the beds. They should be at least 45cm deep to grow a wide variety of root crops and they will need watering more often.

#### Growing in containers (Pots)

You can grow in a wide range of containers even if you have no land to cultivate. Hanging baskets, planters, grow bags, plant pots and recycled containers such as tyres or plastic dustbins can be placed around the school grounds.

#### Advantages of pots

- Less labour intensive and cheaper to set up
- No weeds present in the soil/compost if bought in bags
- Pots can be positioned in different outdoor areas of the school, next to different classrooms so are accessible
- Recycled containers can be used promoting green practices
- Harvesting of crops such as potatoes is easier as the produce can be tipped out rather than dug up
- Growing medium is already of good quality (bagged from the garden centre) so no need for digging and cultivating
- Good for root crops such as carrots as soil will be stone free and will have a good depth
- You don't need to worry about crop rotation as you start afresh each year

#### The downside of pots

- Need regular watering which is a particular problem during school holidays

- Crop yield is lower, per square metre
- Soil/compost will need to be replaced each year
- Heavy to move around
- Initial cost of containers
- Initial cost of growing medium to fill containers which should be renewed each year
- Need to be fertilised more regularly due to limited root environment

#### Where do you position the plot or pots?

For best results any growing area should:

- be situated in full sun with no buildings or trees casting shade
- be on level ground
- be near to a water supply
- be sheltered from strong winds
- have enough space around the containers/beds so that working with tools is safer

### Open Futures membership options

I would like to take out an Annual Membership to the Open Futures Network.

I understand that the Annual Membership will run for 12 months from joining.

Please send me an invoice for:

- Option A  @ £700    Option B  @ £400    Option C  @ £50

See page 16 for option details.

**HT** Prices for Membership Options for the Open Futures Network shown above have been subsidised by the Helen Hamlyn Trust. Prices may be subject to change and are correct at time of going to press.

Name of school \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 School address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Headteacher \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

Having selected your membership option please complete the application form and return to:

**Programme Administrator**  
 The Open Futures Trust  
 Barn C, Park End Barns, Kennington Road  
 Radley OX14 2JW

Telephone 01235 533131  
 Email [admin@openfutures.com](mailto:admin@openfutures.com)

### Seven tips for success

Whether your new growing space is a plot or pot here are some tips to make it work.

- 1 Get a team together to help you.** Governors, PTFAs, and teachers can all be part of the planning and building process which will help to drive it forward and generate funds.
- 2 A head gardener could be appointed from different year groups.** With guidance, this group can be involved in the planning of the garden and keep their classes informed of progress.
- 3 Before excavating check for underground services.** Your contractor may be worried about the extra work created if they have to mow between beds rather than using a gang mower over a large area. Find out what areas of maintenance they are responsible for.
- 4 Use the correct Growing medium.** Beds or pots should not be filled with just bagged compost. A mixture of 75% top soil and 25% well rotted organic matter by volume is ideal for most soil types.
- 5 Remember the bed dimensions.** For plots and pots, the larger they are, the less watering is needed and the better your crops will be.
- 6 Quality of top soil cannot always be guaranteed.** Using recommended suppliers is the best idea as good quality top soil will have no perennial weed roots, no large stones and a loamy texture. (A good mix of sand and clay particles). Keep an eye out for a flush of weed seedlings in the first year which should be removed when in the seedling stage.
- 7 Contact your growit Trainer** if you have any other queries.

We are where we've always been – that is, involved in an ongoing process of continuously developing curricula that enable each individual child in our care to make the very best progress and to achieve the very highest standards possible for him or her.

## Open Futures membership options

### OPTION A

- **One day consultancy** visit from an experienced *Open Futures* curriculum adviser to provide advice and support on training and development.
- **Membership** of the *Open Futures* Online Community for all staff.
- **Two free places** at the *Open Futures* National Conference.
- **A copy** of the NEW *Open Futures* Handbook.
- **Membership** of *Open Futures* Local and National school networks.
- **A copy** of our 'Enquiry Based Learning and *Open Futures*' book.
- **Access** to training courses and conferences.
- **A 10% discount** on *Open Futures* CPD courses.

### OPTION B

- **Half-day consultancy** visit from an experienced *Open Futures* curriculum adviser to provide advice and support on training and development.
- **Membership** of the *Open Futures* Online Community for all staff.
- **One free place** at the *Open Futures* National Conference.
- **A copy** of the NEW *Open Futures* Handbook.
- **Membership** of *Open Futures* Local and National school networks.
- **A copy** of our 'Enquiry Based Learning and *Open Futures*' book.
- **Access** to training courses and conferences.

### OPTION C

- **Membership** of the *Open Futures* Online Community for all staff.
- **Access** to a digital version of the NEW *Open Futures* Handbook.
- **Membership** of *Open Futures* Local and National school networks.
- **Access** to training courses and conferences.

See page 15 for application details.

# The New Primary Curriculum

## Where are we now?

**Open Futures Curriculum Consultant, Bob Pavard, charts our current position on the National Journey towards a new Primary Curriculum.**

*“There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.”*

Graham Greene (1940)  
*The Power and the Glory, Pt1, Ch1*

### The Primary Curriculum

#### Where are we now? – 1

The relatively simple answer is that we are in a sixth year of being “under reviews”, with one of those reviews having “been and gone” and two still running:

The Rose Review and subsequent New Primary Curriculum produced by the now largely defunct Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA), which will cease to exist completely in March 2012 is now confined to the National Archives;

- The Cambridge Primary Review is now in its eighth year and its fourth phase, namely “Building the Professional Network”, a process scheduled to end in September 2012.
- The Review of the National Curriculum in England has just entered its second phase of consultation. On 19 December 2011 (the first day of the Christmas break for most schools!) the DfE published four reports:

- 1 The report of the review's Expert Panel – setting out their recommendations in relation to the framework for the new National Curriculum and recommending that these are debated further before decisions are made;
- 2 A summary of the evidence gathered about curricula for English, mathematics and science in high-performing jurisdictions;
- 3 A research report looking at subject breadth in the curricula used in other education jurisdictions;
- 4 A summary report of the responses to the review's call for evidence.

Free downloads of these reports are available at <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications>

The Secretary of State also announced that the implementation date for the new National Curriculum will be put back a year until September 2014 “to allow for more radical reform of both curriculum and qualifications”.

#### Where are we now? – 2

A more precise answer is that we are now involved in the consultation on recommendations to create the Primary Curriculum of the future – only not many of us have been to date! A total of 5,763 respondents (42% of which being teachers) have contributed to the DfE's review so far. The Summary Report of this rather limited response claims there is “broad support” for the principle of a National Curriculum to provide consistency and continuity. There is similar “broad support” for reducing prescription, thereby giving teachers greater freedom to help children to “realise their potential”.

The suggestions and recommendations that have emerged

from the first stage are largely concerned with the structure of the National Curriculum and what knowledge needs to be imparted, in order for the National Curriculum in England to compare favourably with the educational frameworks of five other countries' or “high-performing jurisdictions”. There is very little mention of the values that David Leat argues for on Page 1, of the life-long learning skills and understanding that most *Open Futures* schools feel so passionately about and of the development of independence and autonomy that underpins the *Open Futures* programme. We need to articulate the importance of these dimensions in order to argue for their inclusion in the next National Curriculum.

#### Where are we now? – 3

What is the answer in terms of current practice? We have eight more terms (including this one) of National Curriculum 2000 with its license to innovate and develop creative learning so well described in Excellence & Enjoyment. The National Curriculum has never been regarded as being the whole curriculum (even though it has become so overcrowded that many schools regard it as such). The Secretary of State's remit for the current Review is echoed in the second of the Key Principles of the Expert Panel's Report:

“Schools should be given greater freedom over the curriculum. The National Curriculum should set out only the essential knowledge ... that all children should acquire and leave schools to design a wider school curriculum that best meets the needs of their pupils and to decide how to teach this most effectively”

#### Where are we now? – 4

Perhaps the most important answer (if we are to avoid becoming one of those thumb-twiddlers that David Leat refers to in his article!) is that we are where we've always been – that is involved in an ongoing process of continuously developing curricula that enable each individual child in our care to make the very best progress and to achieve the very highest standards possible for him or her.

“And how do we do that?” I hear you ask! So I'll conclude with a few reminders, in no particular order:

- providing children with high quality direct experiences of the world around them, starting with the near at hand and working outwards;
- developing children's natural curiosity by encouraging them to ask questions, providing opportunities for them to pursue their own enquiries;
- enabling children to learn from direct experience of working with an ever-widening range of experts and enthusiasts;
- providing meaningful contexts and purposes for learning – doing real things for real!
- enabling children to reflect upon, interrogate make sense of and communicate their experience;
- ensuring that children use a wide range of high-quality tools, equipment and materials;
- enabling children to co-operate and collaborate in tasks that are relevant, purposeful and enjoyable;
- encouraging children to take increased responsibility for themselves, their actions and their work.

Because: “*There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.*”

**Does this sound familiar?**