

Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



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The Impact of Open Futures, in a Primary School on its curriculum, teachers and children

Curriculum focus: General
Main focus: Learning Environment and Resources
People involved: Teachers, Teaching Assistants
Years: age 0-3, age 3-5, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

During the past four years, a number of primary schools in the south and north of the country have been developing *Open Futures*. Their reasons for becoming involved in the programme were many and varied; however, for most of the schools involved, the four curriculum strands, which make up the *Open Futures* programme, were instantly attractive and engaged their interest. Whatever additional benefits the programme might bring, it seemed, from the outset, that these four contexts for learning – *askit*, *growit*, *cookit* and *filmit* – could be exciting, motivating and engaging for everyone involved. Four years down the line, it is clear that these early, often intuitive reactions were not wrong.

The story

A very encouraging range of pupil benefits is now being reported by the schools participating in the programme: engagement, enjoyment, increased literacy, understanding of science, development of thinking skills, questioning skills and social skills. It is very clear that *Open Futures* offers a positive context for learning, as these statements make clear.

“They adore doing it. Because the children are involved hands-on in their learning, and in many cases are making decisions about planning and undertaking the activities, their ownership of tasks increases engagement and self-confidence.

“The fact that they’ve got ownership. It belongs to them. It’s a long term, sustainable thing. Growing something amazes them, all the preparation for example. The understanding that things take time. The conversation and the range of questions that they can ask because the teachers are so well versed in what they’re doing.

“The ownership of everything, the gardens, the teachers taking a step back. This is a new skill for the children. It gives them confidence. With our

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children, when you see confidence, the results do go up. They were very much 'I can't do it', whereas now that's starting to turn round."

Particular benefits are cited for children who, for a range of reasons, have been struggling with school.

"Open Futures is something that could be very important in that as it could potentially provide stability for the children who are very troubled."

A positive impact on behaviour is noted by several Headteachers:

"It gives children the chance to be experts when they might not otherwise be so. We had a challenging group of boys but they would love to dig and cut the grass – they became experts and their self esteem changed considerably and they were recognised as experts by other pupils in the class."

Children with low levels of language skills, either with English as a first or a second language are encouraged to learn by *Open Futures* activities, and their achievement enables them to be more positive about school.

"It helps children access things in a very practical way and rather than looking at reading comprehension and hammering away at those basics. Cutting an apple and slicing it and learning how to put it into a base, they can look and see and understand without having the vocabulary. A lot of our children have very low levels in terms of language and social skills; it breaks down barriers for them."

The cooking and gardening are often described as meeting an important inner need for the children. Social and emotional benefits are therefore apparent, as well as growth in practical and cognitive skills.

"They are desperate to cook, to be outdoors gardening and whatever it is that needs doing outdoors."

For all children, the various activities enable schools to extend the scope of what had previously been achieved. For example, preparing to film involves:

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“... children orally rehearsing, jotting things down, cutting things out, typing it up, messing around with how it will be presented, rehearsing what they are going to say, all these different language skills and editing skills.”

In a *P4C* session observed by a Headteacher:

“The quality of what they were coming out with, they’re posing questions and listening to each other. The impact on standards has been a positive effect.”

There is a universal enthusiasm for the intrinsic value of the strands across a wide range of personal and inter-personal outcomes that resonate with the values of primary school educators. This value reinforces the view that *Open Futures* aligns well with developing educational agendas, represented by *Every Child Matters* and the new Primary Curriculum.

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School Case Studies:

Crigglestone St James

Getting started: creating the climate for success

Curriculum focus: General
Main focus: Management and Organisation
People involved: Teachers, Governors
Years: 1,2,3,4,5,6

A few miles from the centre of Wakefield, Crigglestone St James School has around 300 pupils aged 5-11. The school has very close links with the local church and values its CoE status. Most pupils live in the immediate area in



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privately owned housing and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Unemployment is below the national average as is the number of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school's intake represents the full ability range although attainment on entry to school is above average for most pupils.

The story

Getting any new whole school initiative off the ground takes careful consideration and planning. At Crigglestone St James, the Headteacher and her senior team developed an approach that works well and has, at its heart, the process of wide consultation.

In any one week, despite moves to reduce it, a vast amount of paper will cross the desks of most Headteachers:

“Lots of good things end up in the bin because you know the timing isn't right and you just can't ask the staff to pick up something else. However, sometimes you see something and you know you just have to follow it through.” – Colleen Gibson

When Colleen read about *Open Futures*, she felt, instinctively, that the programme would be right for the school. However, if the school were to embark on something like *Open Futures*, there would need to be full commitment from all of the school community.

She began by discussing it informally with her senior team, who also responded positively. Next, she sounded out her Chair of Governors and other members of the Governing Body:

“It was important that they fully supported the school's involvement and the channelling of resources. Like the senior team, they could see the synergy between *Open Futures* and the school's aims and values.”

Having secured this support, the next step was to talk with the school's staff. For some, involvement in *Open Futures* would result in significant changes to teaching and learning in their classrooms. Following some critical debate, general approval was agreed. Pupils had already offered helpful insights as part of a curriculum review and were equally enthusiastic about the potential of the *Open Futures* programme. Parents too liked what they heard and came on board.

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“Going through this kind of process does take time, but when we came to make the formal application to be an *Open Futures* school, we knew that we had everyone behind us, aware of the challenges, but willing to give it their best shot. It was certainly time well spent.”

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Clifton Infants School

The first years of Open Futures

Curriculum focus: *growit, cookit, filmit, askit*

Main focus: Learning and Teaching

People involved: Teachers, Teaching Assistants

Clifton Infants School is a small school on the outskirts of Wakefield. When the Headteacher, Jane Birkett, heard about *Open Futures* she recognised that the programme was likely to support her in further developing the skills-based curriculum that she and her staff were already promoting. A year on, she is delighted by what has been achieved and, in reviewing the progress with her staff, came to the following conclusions.



The story

growit

There has been tremendous progress in *growit* with all classes being involved in some way with growing a wide range of fruit and vegetables, including broad beans, lettuces, potatoes, leeks, peas, spring onions, spinach, strawberries, tomatoes, redcurrants, rhubarb and raspberries. Most have now been harvested and used in cooking and eating. Many of the children have said that they have tried

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things which before they would have turned their noses up at, such as radishes, onions and garlic.

Staff describe how highly motivated the children are; it has been a joy to see their interest and delight as they prepared the beds, planted seeds and watched them grow, then picked and used their fruit and vegetables in a variety of recipes. Children have had experience of maintaining the garden through activities such as watering, composting and pest control by using eggshells. As a result of the Morrisons *Let's Grow* voucher scheme, the school purchased a water butt, mini greenhouse and cold frame. Every day, pupils from each class take their fruit and paper towel waste to add to the compost bin.

The growing activities, which have gone on all year, have had a huge impact on pupils' awareness of where their food comes from, and how fruit and vegetables can contribute to a healthy diet. During the inspection, the Ofsted inspector was surprised at their knowledge of the ingredients in the Greek salad which they had made, and why it was good for them! Year 2 have also gained some economic awareness by selling extra produce to parents for the school fund.

Foundation Stage staff are now keen to get involved. Two raised beds have been ordered for them, and winter crops for autumn planting will arrive shortly.

cookit

This has been another area of great progress. The smells from the cooking have permeated around all areas of school! All classes have been involved with some food preparation over the course of the year, and in using the excellent resources in the *cookit* kit. The Old Nursery unit now has fully equipped kitchen. Crops from the garden have been harvested and used in cooking such things as garlic bread, Greek salad and broad bean pâté. They have also made banana bread and carrot muffins.

Children have developed their cutting, chopping and combining skills and learnt a great deal about healthy eating. It has been wonderful to see children trying things which they have prepared themselves, and enjoying them. Foundation Stage recently made a fruit salad with a wide variety of exotic fruit. All the children had a go at peeling and chopping which really benefited the development of their fine motor skills, and then they all tried the salad, and without exception, enjoyed it and asked for more!

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The Healthy Schools task group planned a Healthy Eating day during the year, with the purpose of encouraging parents and children to make healthy choices for their lunchboxes, in line with Government standards for school dinners. Local supermarkets supported the venture by providing ingredients, a smoothie maker and staff to come into school to make wraps with the children. Every child made their own lunchbox and filled it with nutritious food, and then we met for a grand indoor picnic. At the end of the day the children took home suggested menus for healthy lunchbox items. Children's awareness about the importance of healthy food has been considerably increased through their experiences in this area, once again commended in our Ofsted report.

filmit

There are now seven films uploaded onto the *Open Futures filmit* website, all produced by the children and some edited by them as well. All teaching staff received training on this strand and are beginning to see opportunities to capture children's experiences. Some classes are watching their edited films as part of their Literacy lessons, such as the visit they made to a local place of worship.

askit

Most classes are doing weekly *P4C* sessions and children are becoming used to the techniques and procedures. Staff have noticed that children who might otherwise be reticent to participate in class discussions, will take an active part in *P4C* sessions. Various stimuli have been used including photographs and artefacts, and children's global awareness has been raised though the themes that have been chosen.

The Primary Framework has lent itself to much more drama and role play activities within Literacy and this has engaged and encouraged high levels of participation by both boys and girls. This year we have seen a big increase in boys' attainment in Speaking and Listening and the results in CLLD in the Foundation Stage profile were the highest for the last four years. We are convinced that this is due to the SEALs work, Circle Time activities and to *askit*, as well as the change in themes to more exciting topics such as Dinosaurs, Space and Africa.

Year Two plans

As we progress into our second year of *Open Futures*, we are all convinced that the decision to be an *Open Futures* school was the right one. This year we are revising our curriculum themes to more interactive and exciting topics which include much more outdoor learning.

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The *Open Futures* strands of cooking, growing and filming are to be incorporated into these plans. For example, classes will sign up to a list of annual tasks for the growing area, and also for related cooking activities. These activities will be filmed or photographed as a record. A covered shelter is shortly to be fitted in the growing area so that groups/classes can work in all weathers.

Training is to be rolled out to more members of staff so that all age groups can participate in all strands. There is a mentoring programme in place for trained staff to support others in delivering the various aspects of the programme.

Foundation Stage are having some raised beds built in their outdoor area so that they can plant and grow their own vegetables and fruit. A food composting unit is to be used to compost all food waste from our school kitchens, and the residue used on our gardens.

We have a number of parents who are already helping with the project, and we are aiming to encourage more to become involved, by promoting *Open Futures* in our newsletters, on our website and by holding an information session.

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Gawthorpe Community Primary School

The impact and development of *growit* and *cookit* across the school and curriculum

Curriculum focus: General, *growit*, *cookit*
Main focus: Learning Environment and Resources
People involved: Teachers, Teaching Assistants
Years: age 3-5,1,2,3,4,5,6

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Gawthorpe Community Primary School is an average sized primary school serving a mixed socio-economic area where the majority of pupils are of white British heritage. Numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals is average, as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A Children's Centre opened in September 2008. It is managed by the governing body and shares a campus with the Early Years Foundation Stage unit.



The school has achieved several national awards including Eco-school (bronze level) and two Healthy School's awards. It is also designated as a National Support School by the National College for School Leadership. Its latest Ofsted report (December 2008) noted:

*"Gawthorpe Community Primary is an outstanding school. The Headteacher resolutely and successfully leads the school. This is a school where innovative practice leads to outstanding outcomes for pupils. Amongst these innovations are the organisation of teaching groups in mixed key stages ensuring that the momentum of high rates of progress never falter; the outstanding curriculum, enhanced by the school's involvement in the *Open Futures* project; the creation of a Children's Centre on site which is improving the life skills and learning opportunities for the very youngest children and their families."*

The story

When Sue Vickerman, Headteacher of Gawthorpe Community Primary School saw the invitation to be involved in *Open Futures*, she could see immediately how well the philosophy and the approach would fit with the curriculum she wanted for her children.

"We had already concluded that developing the learning and teaching from a skills-base rather than a content-base was significant for us because it

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allowed us to construct our curriculum around contexts which would be both motivational for our children but would also ensure that they progressively learnt all the key skills that they would need throughout their lives. It also enabled us to concentrate on lots of first-hand experiences which are important for children who sometimes have more limited opportunities in the wider community.”

Cooking has always been important at Gawthorpe. A specialist room had been developed some years earlier which ensured that all children had lots of opportunities to cook and to bake. Gardening too had been developed, thanks to the expertise and willingness of a member of the school’s administrative staff to guide and support.

When the *Open Futures* project began the two strands continued to be lead by different people and both flourished, assisted by the RHS and Focus on Food. At the end of two years the project was reviewed. Key areas for development were to strengthen the relationship between gardening and cooking, to extend both areas across the school and to develop skills progression in cooking.

Sally Adams, the school’s *Open Futures* Coordinator comments:

“In the first 18 months of being part of *Open Futures*, the staff needed to become familiar with and confident about the correct techniques for growing, preparing and cooking a much wider range of foods; a task ably supported through RHS and Focus on Food training and the on-going support of the specialist Project Officer. As everyone became more confident with the basics for teaching these skills, we began to see just how influential and motivational working in these contexts could be.”

However, two years down the line, we could also see some gaps, across *growit* and *cookit* - lots of produce being grown but not cooked and no real planning in the garden for what we wanted to learn about, cook and eat later in the year. In *cookit*, there was also a lack of skills progression, which made it difficult to assess pupil progress and the impact of this work on pupils’ learning.”

This evaluation led to some interesting and important changes. A cooking-skills progression chart now supports all the planning for all year groups, from Reception/Year 1 through to Year 6, ensuring that there is continuity and

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progression across all cooking activities and that learning goals are clear and can be assessed. The cooking skills are linked to the Focus on Food recipes and the produce grown in the garden.

A member of staff has been released from her more general support activities and is now solely engaged in supporting *cookit* across the year groups. Teaching Assistant Sue Cook was always central to this work at the school.

“Two things stick in my mind from my own time in school – I loved the cooking lessons and I enjoyed being with young children. Becoming a Teaching Assistant at Gawthorpe offered an opportunity to be involved in both but I could never have imagined that it would eventually change my life so dramatically. Now I support all the planning of interesting and engaging activities about food, often within topics and themes, as well as actually cooking with all the year groups in the school. The training and then working alongside the Project Officer has enabled me to see the wider potential of all the activities and my own confidence in working with others and demonstrating all the skills has grown.”

Joint planning across the cooking and gardening teams ensures that all the links are made in the early stages of planning and each team understands the breadth of learning being supported by their colleagues.

cookit is now timetabled for all classes in addition to Years 2 and 3 where the project is focussed. Every class cooks for a two or three week block each term with the cooking linked to skills progression and the class topics. Gardening has been extended from Years 2 and 3 with Year 4 growing a herb garden and Year 5 a memorial garden. In this way the skills learnt in Years 2 and 3 are extended and consolidated.



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Themes and topics right across the school and in every subject area can now have an *Open Futures* dimension, especially through the food. The topic of India now gains much from the pupils learning about but also growing and cooking the distinctive dishes which make up the Asian cuisine, developing their understanding and respect for the cultural identity of the Indian community. *Open Futures* has supported the development of literacy through writing instructions, poetry and reports. Science teaching of plants and habitats has been enhanced by the garden. In DT food packaging for Mothers' Day gifts, sustainable shopping bags and plant containers have been made.

Multi-cultural education will be further supported through a new initiative with a local school which wants to create a new garden from what is currently a wilderness; the children will act as mentors and guides to the school, using their skills and knowledge to help others but also making important links with a different community just down the road.

Links with parents are encouraged through the children themselves taking responsibility for supporting key functions in the school year. This year the Year 6 pupils will prepare lunch for their parents as part of their Leavers programme. Children in Years 2 and 3 prepared a Mothers' Day tea for their mums this year. Harvest Festival now involves produce from the school garden being distributed to the elderly in the village.

Sally concludes:

*"The impact of all the elements of *Open Futures* is everywhere, providing children with interesting, motivating contexts for learning through which they are developing as young people and seeing the relevance of what they do and learn in school.*

*The potential is endless – the more we look at *growit* and *cookit*, the more we see. So many ideas are bubbling around, for example a Cookery Book (Literacy), a Café (Enterprise, Numeracy, Personal Development) and so on.*

*In addition, as we embed *growit* and *cookit* firmly into our learning and teaching, the foci for *askit* and *filmit* become clearer and extend the learning of pupils in so many other ways. Best of all, the children love it and want to be involved. What could be better than that?"*

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Pudsey Bolton Royd Primary School

A great start to the week: *askit* with year 6

Curriculum focus: *askit*
Main focus: Learning and Teaching
People involved: Teachers
Years: 6

Pudsey Bolton Royd is a large primary school close to the border between Leeds and Bradford with some areas of social and economic disadvantage. Over three-quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages, predominantly Pakistani and Indian. Almost two-thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language and a large proportion are at an early stage in learning English.



The story

It's Monday morning and Year 6 at Pudsey Bolton Royd have just enjoyed breakfast together as part of the school's Healthy Eating week. As they enter the classroom for their weekly *askit* session, there is a real sense of anticipation. The classroom is appropriately arranged to promote discussion – desks pushed back to the walls, chairs in a large circle so that no-one is excluded. Jane Howson, their class teacher sits alongside them and welcomes them to the session.

It is clear that the pupils know what to expect and how to be involved. The session always starts with a game or warm-up activity. Today they use the 'fruit salad' activity, changing places around the circle until they are all sitting next to someone other than their closest friends, encouraging them to talk and work with different people. Next is an activity to promote their concentration – trying to get everyone in the group on their feet without any two pupils standing up at the same time. The pupils know the drill and set the activity going themselves. The tension is quite

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palpable as the children observe their peers carefully, consider different tactics for ensuring success and sense responses and reactions. They are delighted when they complete the activity first time around.

Jane now reminds the class what they are trying to achieve – developing a Community of Enquiry in order to think more deeply, ask more questions that help them to discuss the issues raised. The significance of open rather than closed questioning is highlighted. Using a cup as the stimulus, the children quickly show their grasp of open and closed questions, such as:

“Who made it? When? Why this shape, colour and design? What’s its purpose? Who uses it?”

The questions follow thick and fast. The quick warm up stimulates their thinking and gets them ready for what is to follow.

This morning, the stimulus is a Yorkie Bar and the slogan ‘Not for girls’. This fits well with the school’s current food theme and immediately gets their interest. First thoughts are quickly followed by discussion in pairs and then in larger groups. Soon we have a range of questions, which two of the pupils capture on the flipchart for further scrutiny and ‘the vote’. The questions cover a wide range of ideas:

“Is the Yorkie bar really not for girls or is it just an advertising gimmick? Did the person who designed the advertisement really not like girls very much? What gave the person the idea in the first place? Is it just a joke, are people taking it too seriously? Should people make jokes at others’ expense?”

Very quickly, the group vote for the question they would like to discuss further and they are off.

Now follows a most interesting 15 minutes during which the high level language and thinking skills become apparent. Discussion is animated and focused. The children demonstrate how well they are considering all the options being presented. Most importantly, they listen to their peers and respect each other’s viewpoints, even when clearly not agreeing with them. An interesting point comes when one of the pupils points out that they have all assumed that the creator of the Yorkie Bar advertisement was male; in the context of the discussion, a significant pattern of thought.

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Throughout the entire session, pupils demonstrate interest, passion, determination, courtesy and respect for others, deep thinking skills, and the ability to make decisions and follow through a process. Within this context, the teacher's role is finely tuned; supporting the process by occasionally adding a helpful question:

“Can you explain what you mean by that? How do we know that? Can you put it another way? Do you have any evidence for that?”

In this way, the children are skilfully helped to extend and clarify their thinking whilst maintaining their central position in the dialogue. As the discussion gets into full flow, Jane unobtrusively jots down some of the points down so that, if necessary she is able to remind them of what they said and the points they were trying to get across.

The hour flies by and soon it is time to bring the discussion to an end but everyone in the room is left with the feeling that the day has got off to a really good start; their minds and disposition engaged well for whatever comes next.

From a curriculum perspective, the pupils have been involved with literacy in all its forms – speaking and listening, writing and reading. But they have also been developing and practising all their social skills – working individually and in groups, respecting others viewpoints, making decisions, thinking carefully about their own viewpoint and the reasons behind it, taking responsibility for their opinions but also modifying them when they hear the views of others. Jane commented further:

“We deliberately place the *askit* session on a Monday morning because it helps to get the children focused again at the start of a new week. It provides them with a structured opportunity to talk, listen and make decisions about the focus of the first hour of the week. Most importantly, it makes a strong statement about the importance of their views and the views of others. Increasingly, the stimuli pick up on other things, which are happening across the curriculum. The Yorkie Bar fitted with the food theme, but also supports the work we are doing about persuasive writing. On other occasions, we will pick up other themes – disability when visited by wheelchair basketball athletes for example, so increasingly learning is joined up and children can see the links across the range of learning activities that they will meet in any one week or half term.”

Jane has now been developing *askit* with the children for more than two years.

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“It takes time to build the understanding and the skills. As a school, we still have circle time which is very much focused on personal development and feelings but in *askit*, our objective is to build a ‘community of enquiry’ which the children engage with whole-heartedly and in which they practise and develop a much wider range of skills. As a teacher, my role is to let the children take charge of the process but also support them so that they get the best out of it.”

At the end of the lesson, it is clear that the children have thoroughly enjoyed the start to their day. They are animated and pleased about their achievements and happy to have shared their experience with a visitor.

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Southdale CE (VC) Junior School

The perfect lunchbox: a lesson with all four strands

Curriculum focus: *growit, cookit, filmit, askit*
Main focus: Learning and Teaching
People involved: Teachers
Years: 6

Southdale Junior School is situated in the town of Ossett on the outskirts of Wakefield. It currently has 265 pupils. Free School Meals and pupils with Special Educational Needs are well below the national average. The school has Healthy Schools status, Sportsmark accreditation and is part of a Creativity Learning Network.



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The story

The objective of the Perfect Lunch Box was to use *Open Futures* to help pupils to understand the different food groups and, through the use of a food pyramid, what constituted a healthy diet. From there they identified the contents and cost of the healthiest and tastiest lunch box, comparing it to others to decide which provided the most cost effective healthy meal.

Lesson 1

Following on from science work on different food groups and their function in the body, pupils used an enquiry circle to discuss what they enjoyed eating and what was considered healthy and unhealthy (*askit*). Pupils came to their own conclusions and the teaching team responded to questions, guiding them to books, websites and other documents including the ingredients listed on food packaging. There was general, but not unanimous, agreement that too much salt, fat and sugar should be avoided and where possible fruit and salad should be eaten regularly, along with small amounts of protein.

Lesson 2

The class worked in four groups, preparing healthy alternatives to sweets and treats, such as low fat brownies, banana flapjack and carrot cake. These would be listed as one of the items for the ideal box (*cookit*). The children tasted the treats made, discussing and giving reasons for their preference and graphing their favourites.

Lesson 3

Working in pairs the group was tasked with listing the contents of the perfect lunch box and including something that could be grown or prepared in school or at home (*growit*), which linked back to previous *cookit* work. The children worked in groups of four to roughly cost all items using supermarket websites and calculators, from which they arrived at the amount each child should contribute.

Plans for all lunch boxes were presented to the full group. They compared the contents and costs and agreed on the five 'best'. They also decided which of the items they would like to make or prepare in school and which ingredients would be needed.

A morning was designated to shop, prepare and eat the picnics in the school garden. With support from parent helpers, each group used calculators to work out the cost of their shopping list. Within the groups, the children had clear roles: leader, treasurer (who had responsibility for the cash), list carrier (who had to make

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sure nothing was forgotten), two mathematicians (who constantly monitored whether the group was within budget), and a bag packer and carrier. The excitement on the shopping morning was palpable – one parent reported that their child had been up and dressed since 6am that morning!

On return to the school, with the help of a video and lots of parents, each child prepared their own lunch box, which they then enjoyed in the surroundings of the growit garden. Each group recorded this preparation on film to be shared with other schools (*filmit*).

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Chichester Nursery School, Children and Family Centre

Open Futures in Children's Centre

Curriculum focus: *growit, cookit*
Main focus: Learning and Teaching
People involved: Teachers
Years: age 0-3, age 3-5

Chichester Nursery School, Children and Family Centre is situated in the eastern ward of the city. It was purpose built in 2002 and serves just over 200 children under the age of five, who access integrated childcare and education. The Centre became an *Open Futures* Associate Pilot School in 2007.



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The story

Open Futures has been successfully piloted with very young children in a number of the original Development Schools. Chichester is the only Children's Centre, so far, to be included in the programme.

Candy Daffern, the Headteacher, is delighted with the impact it has had on learning and teaching during the first year.



*"If I had known the potential a year ago, I would have taken most other items off my school improvement plan and focused it entirely on *Open Futures*." – Candy Daffern*

The impact has been greatest in three key areas; motivating children to participate and enjoy new learning experiences; extending relationships with the local community; and providing new learning opportunities for parents.

*"We have always cooked, but the *cookit* activities provided by Focus on Food have really encouraged us to raise our game."*

There is now more consistent skill training and the opportunity for children and their carers to prepare and enjoy new tastes, "from flapjacks with unusual ingredients to gazpacho and couscous."

The Centre has developed a valuable relationship with a local fruit wholesaler, who provides a regular box of seasonal and exotic vegetables and fruit. This becomes the focus for discussion and experimentation. Children are encouraged to touch, taste and talk about the contents of the box. Different fruits provide the starting points for stories and games.

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“growit also gave us the confidence to extend our expertise and experience in the garden into new weird and wonderful sensory adventures using texture, smells and tastes.”

The Centre has two very active parents groups, ‘Dads Aloud’ and ‘Mums Aloud’. Both, with their children, are now included in *Open Futures* activities. Currently they are in the process of creating a tiny forest at the back of the garden. They have also arranged well-attended group discussions on healthy eating and cooking on a low budget.

“Open Futures provides us with so many opportunities for developing practical skills with children and their mums and dads. Had I fully appreciated the potential a year ago we would have planned more activities into our curriculum. But next year will be even stronger and involve support from many more parents and other people.”

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Moorthorpe Primary School

Developing Open Futures across the school

Curriculum focus: *growit, cookit, filmit, askit*
Main focus: Learning Environment and Resources
People involved: Teachers, Teaching Assistants
Years: 1,2,3,4,5,6

Moorthorpe currently has 188 pupils, as well as a nursery, though the recent development of a Children’s Centre should boost this number.

The school is part of a Learning Network for Creativity, working collaboratively with four other schools in the local authority.

Unemployment in the area is



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high and there is significant social disadvantage. The school is above the national average for Free School Meals.

The story

Moorthorpe Primary School became an *Open Futures* school in 2006. Its Headteacher, Margaret Wildey, has fostered an approach that focuses on identifying the skills that pupils need to develop within a curriculum, as well as ensuring that there are opportunities for them to enjoy, practise and apply what they are learning. With *Open Futures*, she, and her Governors, recognised a programme that matched these goals and that would respond to all of the elements of *Every Child Matters*.

Since the programme was introduced, all four strands have been successfully embedded within the school's timetable. The programme began with Year 2 pupils and teachers and teaching assistants, not just pupils, had to come to terms with the new strands. Supported by the four professional partners, confidence and expertise soon grew and the potential of *Open Futures* to enhance many more aspects of teaching and learning across the curriculum became clear.

growit takes place weekly, with four small groups working alongside a teaching assistant and experts from the RHS. The teacher, Stephanie Hudson, plans flexibly for this weekly activity in order to respond to the prevailing weather conditions, but the sessions always take place.

cookit takes place every three weeks with Year 2, but is also in place across the school, delivered by a teaching assistant and, as available, the Focus on Food Project Officer. With the support of a local retailer, a new kitchen has been set up so that pupils and staff can work in quality surroundings. The school's approach to cooking has been fundamentally changed by the *Open Futures* philosophy:

"Growing and then cooking their own fruit and vegetables has delighted the children and has encouraged them to try new things." – Margaret Wildey

filmit too is built into the weekly planning, with many areas of the curriculum benefiting from the capacity to capture learning on film. Using the Interactive White Board, the children are also enjoying and learning from the films that other *Open Futures* schools have produced and put online.

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askit is also in place in all year groups at different times of the year and is supporting many aspects of the school's work in literacy, particularly speaking and listening but also pupils' emotional literacy.

As the school comes to the end of its second year of *Open Futures* it is in the process of deciding how best to develop the programme, particularly how to link it with the new Children's Centre and also how to forge greater links with parents and the wider community. In moving forward, the school can be confident that their development of the programme thus far has been an overwhelming success, which it puts down to a number of factors. Vital, was the comprehensive staff development programme and ongoing training promoted and supported by the key partners, which enabled teachers and teaching assistants to feel increasingly confident about running sessions on their own and training others. Also hugely significant is the role played by the school's teaching assistants, without whom the small group work essential to the strands could not happen. Most important, however, is the willingness of everyone to be flexible and supportive:

"Set backs do occur but you just have to find ways of getting round them. It's only a problem if you make it a problem."

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St Bartholomew's Primary School

'Not a blade of grass'

Curriculum focus: *growit*
Main focus: Learning Environment and Resources
People involved: Teachers, Teaching Assistants
Years: 1,2,3,4,5,6

St Bartholomew's is an inner-city primary school serving a culturally and socio-economically diverse community, which is also a focus for support for health-related concerns. The school has no green spaces within its immediate environment.

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The story

An outsider to a school such as St Bartholomew's might feel it would be a tall order to grow anything, given that, at first glance, there doesn't seem to be a single blade of grass.

This didn't phase the school's teachers, who knew that with the help and support of the Royal Horticultural Society they



could develop an attractive kitchen garden and that *growit* could be a focus for pupils becoming directly involved in developing the school site.

*"There had been a gardening club and some ideas for developing the playground. As DT and ICT were part of my responsibilities, and I had already written a school environment policy, taking on the coordination of *Open Futures* seemed natural. As a team, we could see how all of the strands could be a catalyst for so many of the things we wanted our curriculum to offer to the children." – *Open Futures* Coordinator*

An initial audit highlighted lots of positive starting points. The school quads (sunny, sheltered, enclosed spaces) would be safe and clean; some raised beds were already in situ; the school had some tools and a greenhouse; and some re-cycling had been established. On the other hand, staff expertise in gardening and growing vegetables was minimal. The project seemed an opportunity to pull lots of different interests and initiatives together with a much sharper focus on teaching and learning.

The school decided to start *growit* with its younger pupils and gradually extend it across the Key Stages. With the support of the RHS Project Officer and a dedicated Teaching Assistant, children and staff planted a wide variety of vegetables and herbs. Hanging baskets and a potting shed were installed with the support of local business and some parents. Staff, despite feeling some initial anxiety about experience, worked alongside the RHS to develop their skills. Most importantly, the children loved working in the garden and were motivated and engaged.

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Some crops did fail and others did not grow as well as had been expected, but this merely provided extra motivation for the next year:

“The first year was very much trial and error and there were some disappointments, but no one became disillusioned. We just learned more about what would and wouldn’t work and adjusted our thinking and planning.”

As the school comes to the end of its second year, progress has been swift. Mulching of the raised beds is supporting better growth and different varieties of fruit and vegetables that better suit growing conditions in the quads have been planted. More importantly, teachers and children are more confident. Pupils are even to be involved in a wider community project that will see the environment immediately outside the school improved.



“Even on rainy days, there is lots for the children to do and they are applying skills they’ve learnt in other aspects of the curriculum. All of them, regardless of background or ability are taking part and enjoying it.”

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St John the Baptist

Embedding Open Futures across the curriculum and the school

Curriculum focus: *growit, cookit, filmit, askit*

Main focus: Learning and Teaching

People involved: Teachers

Years: age 3-5,1,2,3

St John the Baptist School in Findon is a small, village school, which currently has about 140 pupils.



The story

“In all honesty it started as an added extra to our curriculum and was known only as *growit-cookit*. Now, after three years, *Open Futures* is an integral part of the learning of all pupils. It is the driver for progressing pupils’ skill development from early years to the end of Key Stage 2” – Richard Yelland

During the first year, with the support of officers and trainers from the RHS and Focus on Food, pupils in Reception, Yr1, Yr2 and Yr3 developed a kitchen garden and began cooking and preparing food as part of an extra activity each week. The following year Richard and the entire staff team agreed an ambitious plan to establish *Open Futures* across the whole school. *filmit* had joined *growit* and *cookit*, enhancing them both, and teachers prepared for training in *P4C* enquiry skills through the *askit* strand, which took place at the end of Year 2.

“We linked the *Open Futures* skills into the topic cycle, for example using different crops and recipes to teach about different religions and cultures.”

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During the third year the plan was kept under close review, but initial findings soon indicated that the impact on children's learning and motivation was not as significant as during the previous year.



“One of the problems was insufficient TA support. We have an excellent colleague, who is very experienced in supporting growing and cooking activities. She was really stretched in attempting to work with all classes. We were not prepared to offer pupils a diluted experience of *Open Futures*.”

The revised plan for Year 3 was equally ambitious. *Open Futures* is now an intensive part of Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2; skill training is linked to all topics and themes from Reception to the end of Year 3.

“Pupils in Key Stage 2 are no longer receiving direct skill training; they are now actively involved in applying the skills acquired in Key Stage 1 by working together to develop and maintain the school's physical environment.”

Each class in Key Stage 2 is responsible for part of the school's grounds, including a wildlife area, the pond and the entrance garden. As part of the curriculum pupils make decisions about the use and development of their area (*askit*). They plant flowers, shrubs, herbs and soft fruits (*growit*). Where appropriate they cook or prepare produce for the table (*cookit*). Activities are recorded on a digital camera for pupils' personal use to assess their learning or to share with others (*filmit*).

An assessment of the new cross-school skills progression strategy will take place in an end of the year review. In the meantime Richard is confident that:

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“Generic practical and cognitive skills developed by pupils through *Open Futures* in Key Stage 1 can be successfully applied and embedded across all subjects and learning experiences in Key Stage 2.”

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St Augustine C of E Primary, Manchester

Case Study for *filmit*

Headteacher: Razia Shah

Main school contact for the strand: Lisa Jones

- Razia has taken over school from September 2013 and has a lot on her plate to keep the school on track for standards, but she is incredibly keen to make sure that all the pupils benefit from the programme.
- The school has access to a loaned set of iPads from the LA but these have had to be returned and therefore, although the staff had been given an iPad each there were no class sets. Through discussion, the staff iPads have now been brought together to form a class set, so the development can start with sufficient resources to match aspirations.
- They intend to use the development of film in stages and to use it across the curriculum. There had been an initial plan to use film to record what was happening within the other stands, but not been completely successful as of yet.

Aims for *filmit* programme

- To develop pupil’s ability to understand different genre of film, what they can be used for and what it means to viewers
- To integrate the use of film by staff and pupils into the curriculum both as a tool to teach with and as a means of sharing developments and success
- To develop all users’ expertise with creation of digital imagery: still; animation and film.

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Objectives

Year 1

School does not have the technical setup to be able to embed the process as they want to, therefore during their acquisition of enough equipment/skills the planning sheet (Please see next page) explains the support programme they have agreed.

Year 2

To be confirmed but the main objective is to get staff to automatically consider the use and development as film as a tool within teaching and learning, following discussions this is likely to be through enquiry based project where teachers will identify specific key issue that school needs to improve as the focus for their development work.

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Year 1 Term 1	Days	Tear 1 Term 2	Days	Year 1 Term 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory session – Champion & staff 	1	Spring Term January 2014 – Spring half term		Summer Term Easter – summer half term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning session SLT • Cover the frameworks and support documentation • Set agenda for pupils to take 5 images to record their <i>cookit</i> day experiences. 	.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff working with their pupils on development of a film – supported by Lisa Jones and remotely by Liz H. • Teacher have access to ‘I can sheets’ for internal evaluation of pupil capability, and map their own progress against the technical capability framework • By half term Lisa J will also review where they are in terms of top level Framing Success • School going to procurement of new devices, technical support will be available upon request. • Celebration event where all films are viewed and rated by staff/pupils/parents. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animation as focus for developing pupil skills • Celebration event where all films are viewed and rated by staff/pupils/parents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support session – pupils manipulating images and importing into Photostory 3 – discussion around what 	1	Spring half term – Easter	1	Final half term <i>All filmit</i> outcomes are celebrated – and ones voted most successful (internally) are uploaded to <i>filmit</i>

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<p>looks good, what it tells us about their <i>cookit</i> day ...what would they do better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support session/training staff meeting. Working to look at different approach rather than from images that exist into what they need to pull together a film. Approach from a specific subject and address stages of development and how they can source different images – zoom, different viewpoints • Staff will see the need to shift from using any images to progress through the technical capability framework. • Set scene for all staff to embed film production into the lessons during spring term – up until half term. 	<p>they feel animation will improve engagement or learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at stop frame animation/ cartooning and incorporating mixture film/animation • Using traditional production tools and techniques from technical capability framework • Liz H to run a session for all staff based on their identified area – using whatever devices they then have available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I can animate; ○ iMovie ○ Stop Motion 	<p>website</p> <p>Evaluation of the Enquiry cycle to set goals for second year where each teacher will look at an Enquiry related to Film/animation and the impact upon a specific area of learning.</p>
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Benson Community Primary School

Case Study for *askit*

To say that Benson CPS is situated in a place that was at the heart of Industrial Revolution is perhaps an understatement. An adjacent road is called 'Factory Road' because it led to the Soho Manufactory, opened by Matthew Boulton in 1766 for the mass production of metal accessories and silver-plate articles. Not only was this one of the first places with an assembly line. It was also where Boulton collaborated with James Watt to produce steam engines - 450 of them – which drove factories in other great cities, especially Manchester.

The Soho Manufactory has long since disappeared, to be replaced by rows of terraced houses, and now there is a definite sense of post-Industrialisation all around. There are a couple of 'factories' nearby: for the packaging of poultry, and for the repair of car bodywork – a less creative use of steel than in times past. Soho House, Boulton's home, is a museum, and the only obvious sign of regeneration is the Nishkam Sikh Community Centre up the road, part-funded by the EU.

In short, the teachers of Benson are preparing a modern generation of children of mixed heritages for an uncertain future. That may well be true of several, if not most, of the other schools in the Open Futures network. It just seems particularly poignant to be talking of such a future in a place with such a rich past (in the historical sense – not so much, of course, in the economic sense for most of its citizens).

So, what part has Open Futures, and more particularly *askit*, to play in Benson's preparation of their children?

Cath Rindl, the Headteacher, and her staff faced a choice in 2008 after their OFSTED inspection: either to focus even more on Literacy and Numeracy, or to develop a curriculum that, in her own words, 'motivated the kids to come to school'. Happily, they chose the latter, and – behold! – results in English and Maths have improved. The choice was made, of course, before Open Futures was available to the school, but the further choice of becoming involved in this project was consistent with the emphasis on 'the whole child', especially with giving children opportunities for independent and practical learning. (Sport and music also play a big part in this policy.)

One other aspect of the policy is worth highlighting, and that is the general approach to teaching. In a memorable metaphor, again from Cath, Benson does not have a 'post-box model of learning': education here is much more like the original sense of drawing out from the children rather than putting in.

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(Not that there is a lack of evidence of the usual planning for the broad areas and topics for learning, and a proper respect for the fruit of good listening and enquiry. In an interview with 3 Yr 4 and Yr 5 children of different ethnic origin, I found all of them remarkably well informed on matters large and small. And the confident way in which they spoke was an indication, in itself, of the positive effect of the school policy. Naturally, also, the children spoke very well of *askit*. 'It helps us to disagree. If we have made a mistake, we know which side is best. Say I have got it wrong, Fahriya can correct me,' said Jaheim.)

So, here is the general picture of *askit* development at Benson.

The whole staff were inducted into Level 1 by Nick Chandley at the start of last academic year, and there were soon three *askit* champions in place, one for each of the phases: Oliver Wilson, Zoe Smith and Isabelle Goupielle. These and a couple of others also attended a Level 1 'plus' day with Nick and myself in the summer of 2012. A third step in their own CPD was the Level 2 course, which they completed with Nick and Sara Liptai last term.

It is clear that the post-level 1 courses have made a significant difference, not only to their own practice but also to the support they can give their colleagues. Katie, Zoe and Isabelle now feel more confident in their new roles as *askit* Champion, as is Aimee Beer, who replaced Oliver in this role so that he could concentrate on being Maths Coordinator. (More about Maths anon.)

Since the Level 2, the team have had two sessions with the whole staff concentrating on developing *Askit*, and the pattern seems now to be to take opportunities to infuse the enquiry process into topic work as well as to hold open enquiry sessions with off-curriculum stimuli that are topical or seem likely to capture the children's interests. Teachers have also begun to pay closer attention to the participation of the children, in some cases recording who contributed to enquiries and then giving particular encouragement to those who did not. Throughout the school there is a growing emphasis on children asking questions spontaneously across the curriculum, and this may be a focus for further recording in future.

A good example of topic work that led into philosophical enquiry was in respect of the 'Cool Planet' topic that Aimee did with her Yr 4 class earlier this year. Naturally the sub-topic of icebergs came up, and Aimee decided to use a short footage of the film, 'Titanic', as a stimulus for enquiry. The children created and chose the question 'Should the captain go down with his ship?', and here are some of the thoughts the children expressed:

- 'What about his family? Is it fair for them?'
- 'He wasn't the one looking for the icebergs.'

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- 'But he was in charge of the Titanic.'
- 'He probably knew he was in trouble anyway. The captain of the Costa Concordia is in prison, you know.'
- 'It was the ship maker's fault. Blame him.'

Not only do these show a great range of relevant considerations and criteria in weighing up the rights and wrongs in the situation; they are also steeped in moral imagination and suggest further rich questions, such as: *How much should one consider family feelings in deciding what is right to do for oneself? How far does the concept of 'being in charge' stretch in terms of responsibility? and When more than one person is responsible, how can you fairly allocate blame?*

Similar empathy was shown in children's responses to the 'open' stimulus of The Missing Piece, a poem by Shel Silverstein, and in the ensuing, videoed, enquiry, e.g. "He stopped noticing his friends and the good life he had. Like us – we go on trips, find friends, meet people," or "It's like us. Life is a puzzle. School is one part."

And certainly the children who were interviewed produced some unusual questions for me – such as, 'What inspired you to do *askit*?' and 'Are you good at anything apart from *askit*?'

This two-way interview demonstrated well how the children of Benson are encouraged to be 'outgoing in a nice way', and to take up challenges within and beyond the curriculum. Teachers confirmed that *askit* and the spirit of enquiry that it cultivates had contributed well to this culture. Oliver, moreover, increasingly sees the complementarity between this spirit and the one cultivated in Maths, which is a strength throughout the school. Not only do Maths lessons regularly include challenges and puzzles related to using and applying Maths in real life, but children are encouraged to share their ideas and solutions in collaborative dialogue, just as in *askit*. Oliver also found, incidentally, that the *askit* Question Quadrant came in handy when revising for SATS, enabling his children to stand back from the test questions and appreciate better what they were driving at.

Oliver mentioned one other idea and practice from Maths lessons which seems worth sharing for its potential across the curriculum – the encouragement of children, once they have mastered a particular technique, to see themselves as 'experts' who can, in turn, pass on the technique (or it could be just an understanding) to others.

This practice does not exactly derive from *askit* – if anything, it resonates more obviously with the 'Mantle of the Expert' or 'Dramatic Enquiry' approach - but it does share the same sort of vision of children as both more capable and more constructive than might normally be assumed. It also resonates with the P4C saying – very relevant

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when children are discussing their own experiences and ideas – that children are ‘experts in their own lives’.

Another interesting spin off from *askit* lessons and principles at Benson is the introduction of Talk Homework in the middle phase. The simple but powerful idea is that children take home a question to discuss with their parents, thereby not only enabling parents to have a flavour of some of the questions and discussions at school, but also encouraging parents to engage in a level of talk with their children that they might otherwise not have.

It was clear, then, that the collaborative spirit is imbued into children at the school, but it is also worth noting that this same spirit pervades the way the staff operate. There is regular sharing of practice and ideas between the teachers in each year group, and, now that the *Open Futures* coordinators have done the *askit* Level 2, they are looking to support their colleagues in planned observations in future – much as the *askit* coordinator in Temple Primary in Manchester has been doing (of which, more in their upcoming case study).

A few words now about the other strands of *Open Futures* at the school. As in other schools, *growit* and *cookit* have gone down well, and the children interviewed loved talking about their involvement with these strands. I even managed to tease out of them good reasons for getting involved. Once we had gone from the sublime (roughly, we need to care about plants because without them the planet would be a desert) to the rather instrumental/sensational (roughly, cooking could help you get a job as a famous chef), some serious thought was given to the value of self-catering in a life that would very likely, for most, contain periods of living alone. And, in regard to *filmit*, the children appreciated the value of the skills of changing angles and selection of clips in order to make a more interesting and coherent film.

The *filmit* strand, in fact, looks like expanding considerably next year. Not only is Indi Singh, the Media and *filmit* coordinator, already helping children link their art and music work with filming, but also the school has invested in 60 ipads and interesting projects are afoot, including a mixed age after school club, where teamwork and dialogue will be key foci.

I should end, though, with a special note of the *askit* Club, which Zoe Smith has been running this year. Membership was by invitation – using unusual criteria that have proved remarkably successful. With the greater freedom offered by the club some of the members, particularly the boys, have relished the opportunity to talk about ‘real life’ issues. One of the enquiries recently touched on the possibility that boys/men were more naturally inclined to fight than girls/women – a notion that was not accepted altogether by either boys or girls. At any rate, the concept of fighting was interestingly extended beyond the physical, even to the point when the children considered

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whether you could fight with yourself. Mm ... as a child from a Yr 4 class wrote: "I enjoy *askit* when someone gets me thinking!"

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Camberwell Park Specialist Support School

Camberwell Park at Tatton Show

Name of Headteacher: Mary Isherwood

Status within *Open Futures*

- Pilot 1
- Pilot 2
- Hub
- Associate
- Demonstration
- Partnership

Focus

- *growit, cookit, filmit, askit*
- Management & Organisation
- Strategic Planning
- Learning and Teaching
- Monitoring and Assessment
- Learning Environment and Resources
- Staff development
- Evaluation

People involved:

Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Open Futures co-ordinator,
a Governor and three Open Futures trainers and 88 pupils

The Story

Camberwell Park Specialist Support School is a special school, which caters for children between the ages of 2-11 years who have a range of cognition and learning difficulties including severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties and autism. Some of the pupils have extreme medical needs including life-limiting conditions, and some have challenging behaviour and sensory impairments.

The school applied for the 2011 Funded Partnership. As a school they felt that *Open Futures* shared the vision they had- of celebrating their children's achievements. They

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were shortlisted for the partnership based on their school's suitability to meet criteria set out as follows:

- 46% FSM
- High levels of deprivation in terms of social background
- Significant percentage of children from minority ethnic groups including EAL pupils.

The school also has an outreach role in advising/ supporting and training mainstream primary schools across the north of Manchester and a willingness to be advocates for a skills and enquiry approach to teaching. They had also applied to become a Teaching school shortly before their application to Open Futures.

Year 1 of the Funded partnership introduced the school to *growit* in the Autumn Term followed by *cookit* in the Spring. *Open Futures* worked with the school to provide special adaptations of strand resources over the initial year of training and worked with the school to advise on how school facilities and resources could be best implemented. *filmit* was introduced in the Spring term also. *askit* was especially developed in consultation with Roger Sutcliffe and the schools Senior Leadership Team and was introduced later, in September 2012, as soon as the school felt they were ready to undertake this training and was inclusive of all school staff. Additional provision was later provided to the school for *askit*, in order to support the more specific needs of this school.

The road to Tatton – Year 2

Inspired by a conversation at the 2012 *Open Futures* Conference in Birmingham, Head Teacher Mary Isherwood wished to demonstrate how *Open Futures* may be integrated across the curriculum within Year 2 of this funded partnership programme, within an aspirational project. The idea for exhibiting at RHS Show Tatton Park was proposed as a significant topic, which would necessitate collaboration from the entire school community and which would require further support from *Open Futures* and its training partners.

Significant planning, time and funding were required and were considered to be the biggest challenges faced by the school prior to the show itself. Early planning for the project was specifically designed to demonstrate links across the curriculum including emphasis to elements of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development with strong and obvious links to *growit* and *cookit* and with more discreet links to *askit* and *filmit* forming part of the exhibition at the show itself.

Initial planning stages included discussion with parents through parent governors who were overwhelmed with the achievements of the children and the school and the impact of working with *Open Futures* as a whole. Parents were involved in

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volunteering alongside their children within the growing and cooking activities and in conjunction with strand trainers who gave additional support to the school throughout planning, preparation and development.

Support in terms of funding was sought out both locally through the community and through local fund raising initiatives within the school itself as well as through additional support given centrally by the Trust.

The school decided to exhibit 5 gardens at the show based on the theme of ‘. . . can’ with the central garden exhibiting food grown in cans- ‘from seed to crop’. With clear links between *growit* and *cookit*, the exhibition also included *cookit* demonstrations, tastings and distribution of Camberwell Park’s own adaptation of the recipes at the show.

filmit has been represented throughout the project via the capturing of the journey through film and photography. *Open Futures* commissioned an external photographer to capture the project under the themes of ‘Preparation’ ‘Journey’ and ‘Celebration’. A selection of these photographs and other photographs may be seen in the accompanying document.

All of the children at the school were included in the preparation of the project – a total of 88 children. It was not possible for all children to be included at the show itself so the school also held their own on site flower show on 16th July just one week ahead of the RHS show so that each child could feel part of the celebrations along with their parents and carers. Children and the school community were able to take part in an *Open Futures* Celebration of Tatton on that day, supported by the Curriculum Team and incentives provided by the Trust.

PR and marketing

Camberwell Park created a twitter account and tweeted their own updates in the run up to and during the show itself in order to raise the profile of the event and that of the collaboration with *Open Futures*. On Press Day, the stand was visited by John Edwards (Director of Education and Skills, Manchester City Council) as well as the Lord Mayor of Manchester, and George Osborne, MP for Tatton and Chancellor of the Exchequer who spent some considerable time talking to Mary and to the children at the show.

Conclusions

The desired legacy of the project at Tatton was to celebrate the achievements of the children following the two-year Programme partnership and to demonstrate that cognition and learning difficulties are not a barrier to learning. It was also the intention of the school to be ambassadors for *Open Futures* and to spread the message widely about the value of *Open Futures*, delivered through skills and enquiry to all learners and key influencers.

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Asked how *Open Futures* has impacted upon the school, Mary Isherwood reports that all strands have had a positive impact with the greatest impact seen within *growit* and *cookit* in terms of the perspective to changes to school facilities and the way in which curriculum subjects are taught. Carmen King, the school business manager reports that *growit* and *cookit* were extremely important aspects of the programme for this school since their children benefit greatly from the hands on skills and tactile nature of this part of the curriculum.

askit has been reported as the biggest challenge to this school since all of their children have cognition and learning difficulties and many are non-verbal although the school are keen to ensure that pupil voice is central to what Camberwell Park is about as a school. However, enquiry was notably demonstrated discreetly throughout the show with the children seen to be asking questions based on the activities that they had participated within eg:

“Why is lemonade called ‘sparkling’?”

“Is it OK that some people don’t want to try the smoothie?” “Yes because we don’t all have to like banana”

Clear curriculum links were demonstrated to maths and science through *growit* and *cookit* and these were evident in the demonstrations on the Press Day.

“ Cutting a strawberry into two makes halves – cutting both halves makes quarters. Do we think we need to cut the pieced a little smaller? How will that affect the end result? Will it be too lumpy?” “If it is we can add more apple juice”

“Shaking the salad dressing makes it become opaque. This action cannot be undone”

It was also noted that children were able to identify ingredients, problem solve and suggest improvements:

“This salad dressing smells very garlicky” “we could add more lemon juice or oil”

It was clear that the staff and children were very proud of their achievements at Tatton Show and were very keen to demonstrate what they had achieved to others.

The school quote “(the show) was a calculated risk and one worth taking in relation to the rewards it will bring to all involved... our children constantly amaze and surprise us with their imagination and their abilities and planning and preparing the gardens for Tatton have been no exception!

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Open Futures is now an embedded part of the 'way we do things around here' and we will continue to invest in ensuring that the work continues beyond the funded project. We have close links with other schools in the Manchester Cluster so the partnership working which means so much to us will also continue".

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Openit 11 – Curriculum planning case studies (spring 2015)

St John the Baptist CofE Primary School

Taking responsibility for their learning and becoming as independent as possible

Open Futures co-coordinator, Kate Lax, describes the St John's curriculum and the planning process.



The St John's curriculum

We base our learning on first-hand experience and use a range of teaching techniques throughout the full range of subjects.

Our aim is that St John's children should:

- develop imaginative, creative and enquiring minds
- acquire knowledge and skills relevant to this fast-changing world
- pursue and develop their interests and talents within the curriculum, so that they become valuable and contributing members of the community

Open Futures' principles match our own closely and provide us with a framework from which we can hang our activities; we can keep them in clear focus whilst developing a skills focused approach.

Planning for and assessing *Open Futures*

Our teachers use a common planning format, paper copies of which are kept in an *Open Futures* folder supported by IT records. All four strands are planned through current topics being taught and learning is linked to relevant areas of the national curriculum. When planning we allow for a progression of skills across the key stages. In key stage 2 the children apply the skills they have learnt in a range of contexts. We have a draft film it progression and we are piloting a *P4C* progression involving self-assessment by the pupils. We use a gardening/ cooking progression of skills provided by the RHS and Focus on Food trainers.

Open Futures Trust

Case Study Collection



Activities are differentiated for each group of children by referring to the skills progression for each of the strands. We do not specifically assess these strands because we are using them as a vehicle to promote engagement of the children (which we know leads to good learning). We then assess the various subjects that *Open Futures* lead into to see how children are progressing.

Managing and organising *Open Futures*

One of the most significant factors in ensuring that *OF* makes a significant impact is the fact that we give a day each week over to *Open Futures* in KS1 and half a day in KS2. This means that it happens regularly and all staff share in its delivery, ensuring that we aren't dependant on one or two people carrying out the work. This spreads expertise across the staff as they share good practice and means that the children frequently have the opportunity to develop their skills in each of the 4 strands. Teaching assistants meet with teachers to deliver short term plans for each strand whilst one TA has time to meet with the *OF* coordinator to put in place longer term plans for *growit* and *cookit* throughout the school.

***Open Futures* and the national curriculum**

Parts of the national curriculum are particularly well supported by the *Open Futures* Programme:

- through *growit* the children have learnt science topics such as plants, soils, life cycles and ecosystems. The new curriculum for science has remained broadly the same: Y1 children now have to identify specific plants and trees, find out what temperatures are appropriate for plants and identify specific food chains; Y6 will now be taught about evolution.
- *cookit* meets the new design and technology cooking requirements fully; our children have always learnt about healthy eating, where food comes from as well as how to cook to enable them to feed themselves now and in later life.
- the new curriculum doesn't directly link to *filmit*, though it contributes to part of the new computing targets for both key stages
- the spoken language programme of study identifies skills that can be learnt through *askit*
- aspects of Maths, such as measurement (of length, weight and capacity) are reinforced through *cookit* and *growit*

Reflection and Assessment

We've been using the Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI) self-assessment and evaluation for 2 years. Throughout the school, children use ELLI to assess how they are developing specific characteristics that support their learning.

Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



Open Futures plays a full part in this process. We believe that if the children in our school are to become lifelong learners then they need to take responsibility for their learning and become as independent as possible.

“Open Futures’ principles match our own closely and provide us with a framework from which we can hang our activities; we can keep them in clear focus whilst developing a skills focused approach”

Kate Lax is a year three teacher and Open Futures co-coordinator at St John the Baptist. She has been teaching for eighteen years and began working with Open Futures when St. John the Baptist became a pilot school in 2005 and subsequently one of our first flagship schools.

The semi-rural village of Findon lies four miles to the north of Worthing, close to the site of an Iron-age fort at Cissbury Ring and the remains of prehistoric flint mines in the neighbouring hills. There’s been a village school in Findon since 1829, although the school moved to the current site on School Hill in the 1860s.

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Temple Primary School

Planning a wide and rich curriculum



Headteacher Vicky Lord and Assistant Headteacher, Rachel Dardis of Temple Primary School, Manchester, describe how teachers and children together plan an engaging and challenging, curriculum.

Lots of questions

The principles that underpin children’s learning in Temple are:

- *TOGETHERNESS*
- *EXCELLENCE*
- *MOTIVATION*
- *POTENTIAL*
- *LEARNING FOR LIFE and*
- *EQUALITY*

Open Futures Trust

Case Study Collection



With the advent of the new primary curriculum, we looked again at our vision for the children and how our principles could be retained and protected. The resulting curriculum is, therefore, wider and richer than the statutory curriculum. Some subjects, such as English and Maths, are individually planned. Other subject areas develop directly out of the chosen topics and themes. Teachers use a common planning format. Long term planning maps the wide range of experiences the children will have and is mainly project-based and articulated in lots of questions. Medium term plans provide the detail and the key learning objectives. Within the documentation the *Open Futures* strands are colour-coded to indicate how the different elements of the programme will deliver and enhance learning.

Children's interests and curiosity

All planning is as child-led as possible with teachers and children planning together. Teachers know what has to be covered at different times and in different key stages but the children's interests and curiosity, framed in a wide range of questions, are fundamental to arriving at topics and themes which enthuse, extend understanding and enable them to make progress. Children's questions are valued, which, in turn, means that they feel valued as individuals, this promotes the ethos we want at Temple.

askit

This approach is supported by the end of term Project Celebrations. Teachers and children together 'look back' to review their learning. They check to see if everything has been covered and understood; have all the questions the children posed been answered. They also look forward to what will come next and how they would like to shape the next steps in learning. *askit* is often the vehicle for developing the next area of planning.

School-wide understanding and commitment

Temple is a very large primary school and when we embarked on *Open Futures* in 2011, it was vital that our approach to managing the strand training programme would result in a school-wide understanding and commitment to the *Open Futures* programme. For this reason, with strong support and leadership from the senior management team, all the senior leaders were trained in all four strands. This ensured that a thorough understanding of the programme was well established right across the school. Over the next two years, as the confidence of teachers' and teaching assistants grew, the planning and review of the *Open Futures* programme was devolved to departments. This encouraged *Open Futures* planning to grow directly out of the subjects and themes. It is thus not a 'bolt-on' but a firm, clear way of responding to the learning objectives within the planning.

Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



So many questions

Open Futures is now thoroughly embedded within the curriculum. New staff are inducted by the many resident experts we have in school. 'Pupil Voice' ensures that the views of children are constantly taken on board.

We now have so many experts to support us. Recently, wonderful *filmit*, *growit* and *cookit* training was provided to new staff by a Year 2 teacher, a TA and a middle leader. The programme is now sustainable and cost-effective because it is part and parcel of the way teachers teach and the way children learn at Temple.

Enhancement opportunities

filmit and *askit* have proved to be the easiest to use as key drivers for the new statutory primary curriculum. "*askit* brings depth to learning in all subjects, but especially speaking and listening and filmmaking can be used in just about every subject area. Because of the 'small group' organisation for *growit* and *cookit*, the learning supported through these strands is more in terms of enhancement opportunities: ways in which key learning is applied and practised. Children achieve specific skills and competencies but also see the relevance of them in the completion of broader-based tasks. With *Open Futures*, the children learn through hands-on, practical experiences. The full integration of *growit* and *cookit* into the statutory curriculum happens best in Early Years and Foundation where these strands are at the heart of so many of the learning objectives.

Enthusiastic, confident, analytical

Our underpinning pedagogy is enquiry. Our children are 'very vocal' and happily engage in reflection, self-review and assessment of their own learning. They are keen to ask questions and find answers and the school's leadership team constantly seek ways to encourage this independent spirit.

To this end, there is now a well-established Pupil Education Team (PET). This is comprised each year of 12 pupils from years 4 to 6. This team is trained to observe lessons, consider displays and generally focus upon whatever the school is highlighting at a point in time. The children work alongside a teacher and become very skilled at observing processes and procedures and providing the senior management team with another viewpoint and perspective.

What better way to help them become enthusiastic, confident, analytical young people, willing to respond to and shape their futures?

"With Open Futures, the children learn through hands-on practical experiences"

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Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



Hart Plain Infant School

Use courage, raise aspirations, show respect and integrity

Deputy Headteacher Lynn Thurleigh- Ratcliffe describes the Hart Plain curriculum and the planning process.



Values, principles and aims

Hart Plain's motto is "Happy to Learn, Growing together" and our core values are respect, integrity, courage, happiness and aspiration.

We are committed to continuous improvement and lifelong learning for both children and adults. Our curriculum aims underpin our planning, namely that each child will be provided with opportunities to:

- have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum, including the National Curriculum
- learn through a range of learning experiences supported by our new learning skills 'FOCUS'
- achieve his/her full potential through the development of concepts, skills, knowledge and attitudes
- enjoy a variety of learning activities that have been carefully planned and resourced to meet his/her needs and abilities
- develop as a whole person, recognising their moral, spiritual, physical, social and intellectual needs
- work independently with confidence and positive self-esteem
- enjoy learning which is organised in a caring environment where everyone is fully valued
- learn in school and outside the classroom in the school grounds and off site visits

Focus

We have recently introduced FOCUS, a mnemonic for the learning skills and behaviours that we need to develop throughout our school.

Focus – Look and listen carefully

Open – Be aware, notice and think about what others say

Caring – Show Kindness and consideration to others and their ideas

Up – Aim High!

Smiley – Enjoy learning, tackle challenges with a smile!

Each of the above is attached to a character to help the children remember them.

Open Futures Trust

Case Study Collection



Planning

Our curriculum skills map provides skills progression for each subject. We have devised termly themes, for which we produce a planner in the form of a chart containing a 'box' for each planning area, ie EYFL and YR – the 3 prime areas and 4 specific areas; KS1 – Reading, Writing, Numeracy, ICT and the Foundation Subjects. Recently we introduced new proforma for maths and literacy that allow for 'up learning' (ie moving the children on during a session) and one for other curriculum areas.

Open Futures

Open Futures has its own "box" and therefore appears as a distinct area (EYFS & YR) or subject (KS1) in every termly planner; links are specifically made on maths and literacy planning. We feel that *Open Futures* supports most of the National Curriculum subjects, particularly literacy, maths, science, art, computing, geography, RE, and citizenship/PSHE.

Open Futures reflects our core values and principles perfectly; it provides 'hands on' real experiences alongside opportunities to reflect deeply. Children are focused and love working within each of the strands, which provide motivation and help to develop their reasoning and thinking skills. We believe that learning should be meaningful and accessible to children.

Our core values sit underneath *Open Futures* in that the activities regularly give children the opportunity to use courage, raise their aspirations and show respect and integrity in a variety of wider experiences. It also makes them happy (a key core value) so they learn well!

Progression and Assessment

We are developing a self/peer assessment model that underpins progression and supports our school learning values. Staff and children use the skills ladders for each strand, which we have adapted from the skills progression documents provided by the strand trainers.

We are currently trialling an '*Open Futures*' learning journal in which children record their key achievements and include their assessments; these journals will be shared with parents.

Lynn Thurleigh-Ratcliffe is deputy Headteacher at Hart Plain Infants. Lynn has been involved in the strategic development of *Open Futures* since the school joined the programme and has worked closely with successive *Open Futures* Co-ordinators and Strand Champions.

Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



Situated between Portsmouth and Petersfield and close to the Hampshire/West Sussex border, Hart Plain Infants shares its campus with Hart Plain Junior and Cowplain Community School.

The school joined *Open Futures* at an early stage in the programme's history; over the years, which included a change of headship. Hart Plain has fully embraced *Open Futures* and become one of the first Flagship Schools in the country.

"Open Futures reflects our core values and principles perfectly; it provides 'hands on' real experiences alongside opportunities to reflect deeply"

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Camberwell Park Specialist School

Planning the curriculum in a specialist school



Allison and Alison are seen here on the right with teacher Jane Greenfield and Mary Isherwood the headteacher on the left during a curriculum planning session



Deputy Headteacher Allison Taylor and Assistant Head Alison Randall describe Camberwell Park's curriculum, particularly the plans, priorities, partnerships and personal learning programmes which have contributed to it being designated by Ofsted as 'Outstanding' and 'A wonderful' school.

Plans

The long-term curriculum plan is in place as a spiral curriculum that ensures that all subjects are taught each term/half term with a foundation subject threading through each of them. The key areas of learning are re-visited every two years.

Our annual plans depend very much on the children we have in our school and the teachers responsible for the core subjects design their own planning format to ensure that they meet the needs and the potential of all the pupils. Other teachers and TAs follow these essential guidelines.

'Pupil Voice' is another significant and important element in our thinking about the curriculum. Children who are fully engaged with their own learning always achieve more so here at Camberwell they are supported to think about what within the topic they want to learn about or a question linked to the topic to which they want an answer; teachers then incorporate this within the requirements of the spiral curriculum.

Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



Priorities

Our curriculum planning is embedded in the school's shared values through our **PROUD** behaviours. We are:

- **P**assionate about ensuring that children have access to a broad, balanced and fun curriculum
- **R**espectful of all the individual differences and needs of our children
- **O**rganised to meet these requirements and provide appropriate learning opportunities and resources
- **U**nderstanding – all of the teaching staff have a high level of subject knowledge across the curriculum and are ...
- **D**edicated to adapting the curriculum to meet all the children's needs and ensure that all children develop to their full potential

We also encompass Manchester's Equal Opportunities policy and the Every Child Matters guidance from 2004. We want all our children to achieve and to develop skills to the best of their ability. Most importantly, we want to enable them to have respect for themselves, high self-esteem, be resilient and to be able to live and work co-operatively with others.

We are also a Rights Respecting School, committed to UNICEF's core principles of individual rights and responsibilities.

SEAL is also fully embedded within our curriculum, linked closely with PSHE, again ensuring that all the different strands are covered.

Partnerships

Camberwell Park embarked upon a two year partnership with the Helen Hamlyn Trust in September 2011 to enhance the existing curriculum model. We felt that the programme would enable us to blend skills and enquiry in a creative way and allow pupils to develop their natural curiosity and enquire about the world around them.

Open Futures was introduced to us as a school at just the right time. We were reviewing and extending the existing curriculum model and it helped us to confirm that we were doing the right thing in engaging our pupils in real life learning and helping them to see the world in a new light, particularly by questioning and making choices.

Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



Personal Learning Programmes

Open Futures is now an integral part of our curriculum and will remain, so now and in the future, particularly as we adapt our plans to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum.

For us, the programme allows us to blend the four aspects of ‘*growit, cookit, filmit* and *askit*’, enabling the children to explore the worlds of gardening, horticulture, cooking, film and philosophy and to develop a wide range of practical skills. However, we always have to give careful consideration to how the curriculum is taught as our cohort changes year on year; this means we have to think ‘outside the box’, ensuring all the children have equal access.

With *Open Futures*, sometimes a strand is taught as a discreet lesson; sometimes through the topic. *askit* is taught as a discreet lesson for some children and is differentiated for others within lessons.

The objective is always to meet the needs of our children and help them to make progress. Our children’s attainment can vary across key stages so teachers are expected to teach *Open Futures* key skills at an appropriate level for each child. Pupils are also encouraged to become independent learners by making choices and decisions for themselves.

Camberwell Park is a designated specialist support school. It provides for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties as well as complex communication difficulties including autism.

The school has gained the National Healthy Schools Gold Award. It also has the Eco-Schools, Sports Activemark, Investor in People status and Financial Management in Schools awards.

“Open Futures is now an integral part of our curriculum and will remain so, now and in the future”

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Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



Brampton Primary School

Joining together to build our future



Joining together
to build our future



Assistant Headteacher, Marie Hardie, describes the Brampton Primary curriculum and the planning process.

The Brampton Curriculum

Our curriculum at Brampton is designed to foster and develop children's creativity. Our annual overview consist of six whole school, half-termly themes: Wonders of the World, Famous People & Landmarks, Imagination & Make Believe, Mother Nature, Travelling and Games. We arrived at these topics through a process that combined teacher and pupil voice: staff meetings and class councils considered the themes and ideas that were most inspiring and engaging.

Planning

Lead teachers create the long and medium term from which teachers then plan individual lessons.

Our planning is recorded using a common format and saved on our system. Learning is driven by a half-termly enquiry in the form of year group specific questions and subject specific Learning Challenges (which may take more than one lesson – several learning challenges can be going on at a time), for example:

- Whole school theme – Autumn term 1: Wonders of the world
- Year 4 question: How important is water?
- Science learning challenge: Where do the puddles on the playground disappear to?

Open Futures

Open Futures appears within each half-termly overview, where ideas for each strand are identified alongside global learning/awareness; activities for each strand are then highlighted on the individual planners. We use *growit* to deliver several elements of the new Science curriculum and *cookit* similarly for DT and Geography. *askit* supports all subject well, but especially RE, PSHE and English.

All members of staff are involved in implementing the *Open Futures* programme: in addition to the roles described above, I have overall responsibility for curriculum planning; teaching assistants work with groups of children in activities planned by teachers.

Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



Enquiry

Children's curiosity is fostered through inspiration days during which they record what they already know and what they want to find out about the subject; teachers model questions to stimulate children and they, in turn, propose their own questions for the basis of an enquiry. *Open Futures* has introduced a much wider concept of the world and has encouraged curiosity and enquiry; additionally it has resulted in us (through *askit*) to look at specific issues – for example social justice, fairness, and equality.

Reflection and Assessment

We use working walls for children to post their questions and resulting enquiries; these, alongside pre – and post-learning challenges, are used to encourage children to reflect, review and assess their learning. Children use photos and notes to record their learning journeys in their books. All this is in keeping with the school motto: "Joining together to build our future"

Brampton Primary is in a residential area of East Ham, close to the ever- growing area of Docklands and to the O2 Arena. The school was built in 1915, with two buildings – Infant and Junior – which have been used as girls' and boys' buildings and as separate primary and secondary schools.

In the middle of the playground stands The 'Shed' – a building with a rich history, having started life as a bicycle shed but later having its sides built in to create two rooms. During former pupil Dame Vera Lynn's time at Brampton The 'Shed' was used as a craft room; more recently it has been a resource centre and following the current building programme will become a well-being centre. The school has a new Dinner/Sports Hall with extensive facilities, along with a purpose-built teaching kitchen.

"Open Futures has introduced a much wider concept of the world and has encouraged curiosity and enquiry"

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Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



Outwood Grange Academy

Planning the primary curriculum



Lee Wilson, Associate Executive Principal for the Academies Trust and his team of curriculum support teachers have developed an imaginative detailed planning process which will ensure that all pupils in the Academy's three primary schools experience a stimulating learning programme which addresses all aspects of the national curriculum.

The Outwood Grange Family of Schools consists of eight secondary schools and three primary schools:

- Outwood Primary Academy Kirkhamgate
- Outwood Primary Academy Ledger Lane
- Outwood Primary Academy Lofthouse Gate

All three are in Wakefield

Lee describes the Outwood Primary curriculum and the planning process. It is designed to challenge children of all abilities and to help them become independent learners. The Outwood Plan is a comprehensive guide, but it is the teachers whose skill, imagination and hard work convert the plan into effective learning experiences. The Six key features of the Outwood curriculum are: Enquiry, Coverage, Progression, Recording, Sharing and Parental Engagement

Enquiry

Our annual plan is based on six termly topics. Within these we move from teacher directed, structured enquiries to teacher supported and children directed enquiries. Each topic starts with a big question, which encourages all teachers to ensure that learning is led by enquiry. The seven-week plan is built around seven smaller questions that unpack the bigger question. The first two or three questions are posed by the teacher and are planned to cover all elements of the national curriculum. When teachers are confident that the statutory content is embedded the remaining questions for the term come from the children. Teachers thus guide the children towards more independent learning.

Open Futures Trust

Case Study Collection



Coverage

Our planning documents are simple but comprehensive. We have an annual overview for the teacher which outlines how the national curriculum has been broken up across each year group. Teachers are aware of what they are expected to deliver across the year.

So as they cover that content throughout the year and as they are happy that children are progressing through the content they highlight it. During the year they can see what is left to cover.

Progression

Our second planning document identifies the questions and provides space for a week-by-week evaluation of progress. Highlights in learning are described and, most importantly, the next steps in learning are identified.

Recording

By the end of the unit the documents come together to make a single booklet, which will be available as a starting point for other teachers next year. This provides case studies of units of work and examples of children's work. It also gives us a picture of standards for moderation.

Sharing

The strength of working as a collaborative group means that we are creating a bank of resources from the three academies. Throughout the year teachers from all the schools come together to share ideas and celebrate progress.

Parental engagement

Across the three schools parents are involved with their children's progress. One particularly successful activity is through Twitter.

Each class has a Twitter account and all the parents who want to be are linked to this account. Where appropriate during lessons teachers take photographs or make short videos of the learning activities which are tweeted live. Twitter has resulted in parents having a more informed understanding of what their children have been doing in school. They no longer need to ask children what they have been doing today they can now see for themselves.

Children also take pictures on tablets or phones, which are then tweeted by the teacher. We are also getting parents tweeting back.

Tweets certainly impressed Ofsted inspectors during a recent inspection by providing further evidence of a rich and diverse curriculum.

Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



Open Futures

During the next few years *Open Futures* will play a very significant role in the development of children's learning in the three academies. We share the *Open Futures'* pedagogy of independent learning through an enquiry approach. The four strands will provide teachers with the skills and enthusiasm to plan appropriate learning experiences for children of all ages.

Lee Wilson is an award winning teacher and Associate Executive Principal for Outwood Grange Academies Trust. Prior to joining the Trust in September 2013, Lee worked as a primary Headteacher. In 2009, Lee led a curriculum development programme for the Yorkshire and Humber Gifted and Talented Hub. He has delivered a range of training on leadership and curriculum development at a local, national and international level.

"During the next few years Open Futures will play a very significant role in the development of children's learning in the three academies"

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Central Bedfordshire College

Open Futures in Further and High Education



**Central
Bedfordshire
College**

"Why Innovation? Making it happen at Beds". The Annual Teaching and Learning Conference, University of Bedfordshire, 30th June 2014

The Annual Conference invited participants to consider "Pedagogic Innovation". Admitting that such innovation was long overdue by the University and perhaps also by Higher Education across The UK, it asked specifically for "Ideas for new disruptive technologies that will characterise our response".

Currently rated 'good' in its last inspection, the College is committed to being recognised as providing an 'outstanding' quality of education across all areas of the curriculum and in the view of the College's Principal and the Leadership team: "Outstanding will be achieved by moving to a culture which emphasizes enquiry and reflection and results in students having the capability, not only to demonstrate skill development but independence and critical thinking."

It was appropriate that within this context Professor James Crabbe and Eamonn Egan facilitated a seminar which explored the introduction and progress of *Open Futures* in the curriculum planning of the Central Bedfordshire College.

Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



The future is clear – the future is open

Professor Crabbe was in no doubt that concepts and processes of The *Open Futures* Learning Programme are relevant to improving learning and teaching in Further and Higher Education.

“It is an enabler and facilitator par excellence in primary schools and can be equally as effective for students and their teachers in any educational setting”.

The seminar began with James describing his introduction to *Open Futures* and what prompted him to meet with the *Open Futures*’ team to discuss the possibilities of extending the programme into Further and Higher Education.

James had been enthused and encouraged by what he saw happening in Gallions Primary School in the London Borough of Newham and one of the *Open Futures* Flagship schools.

He recognized the significant contribution that the *Open Futures* programme, centred in practical hands-on experiential learning, made to all aspects of the school, impacting on the social culture that prevailed and the expertise and skills of all the staff.

During the 45 minute workshop, Professor Crabbe alongside Eamonn Egan, the Assistant Principal of the Central Bedfordshire College outlined some of the significant elements of the *Open Futures* programme;

- Its key objective of inspiring and engaging young people and developing an ‘I can’ attitude to learning and to life.
- Giving young people permission to dream beyond their sense of place
- The significance of questioning, critical thinking, enquiry and communication skills
- The importance of community and community involvement in learning in all its forms

The future is clear; *Open Futures* is a model for education at all levels

Eamonn Egan described the introduction of *Open Futures* into the College and illustrated how the training is already impacting on student response and teacher skills.

Currently, 170 staff are undertaking Level 1 *askit/P4C* training to support them in developing enquiry- based learning across their curriculum area. Staff have committed to ‘trying out’ a community of enquiry with their students and interesting stories of these experiments are beginning to emerge from Construction, Public Services and Pathways – the latter involving young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

For Eamonn, the power and potential of philosophical enquiry is already beginning to impact on the learning outcomes for the students and demonstrating their capacity to develop as thinkers and independent learners.

Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



In the next three months, all 170 staff that work directly with students will be trained in *askit* Level 1. This will include teachers, assessors, learning support assistants and learning mentors.

In conclusion, James posed the question; How does Leadership change and improve the culture of an institution and could *Open Futures* be a catalyst for such a change within Central Bedfordshire?



Professor Crabbe is a Fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford, a Senior Research Associate of the Department of Zoology at Oxford and a Research Professor (part-time) at the University of Bedfordshire. Formerly he was Executive Dean of the Faculty of Creative Arts, Technologies and Science at the University of Bedfordshire from 2005-2014, and before that Professor of Protein Biochemistry and Head of School at the University of Reading.

He is a National Leader of Governance, and since 2010 Chair of Governors at Central Bedfordshire Further Education College. He is an Honorary Professor at Changchun University of Science and Technology, China.

He is a Vice-President of the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology. In 2006 he won the 6th Aviva/ Earthwatch International Award for Climate Change Research and in 2008, the Great Contributors to China Creative Industries Award, presented at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing.



Dr Eamonn Egan is Assistant Principal at Central Bedfordshire College, responsible for maintaining standards and driving improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment as the College strives to be outstanding.

His career in further education began in 2002 as ESOL manager at Uxbridge College. Prior to this he worked abroad as an English teacher in Japan and Malaysia. Eamonn is currently completing a part-time Doctorate in Education at the Institute of Education in London. His research interests are in the relationship between a person's identity and sense of self, and their use of language and literacy.

Central Bedfordshire College, offers a wide range of vocational and academic Level 1 to 3 courses for 16 to 18 year olds and adults. In September 2015, it will welcome its first cohort of 14 to 16 year old students.

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Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



Heald Place Primary School

The IT factor; A new paradigm for learning?



The Open Futures strands have created opportunity and experience throughout Heald Place.

- *askit* sessions have become regular weekly features and have developed both our children's and staffs thought processes
- *cookit* has become an embedded part of lessons with children experimenting with new techniques, tastes and tantalising new recipes to try at home.
- *growit* has flourished and our Pocket Garden, a haven of community spirit, has rejuvenated a plot of land into a floral and vegetable bonanza that both children and families can cultivate and care for
- *filmit* has started to become part of our computing curriculum and we are looking at further ways to bring this to the fore

This raised the issue . . . could and should 'Its' become more wide spread? To find out we created new Its to revamp Golden Time afternoons.

Enthusiasm and high expectations

The strong and dedicated Lower Key Stage 2 team planned *surviveit*, *codeit*, *computeit*, *craftit*, *constructit*, and *investigateit* each with a personalised learning journey that ended with a finished product. The most significant part of the planning involved the children choosing which '*It*' they wanted to stay with for the six weeks. They could vote for their 3 favourites and were guaranteed to get one of their choices. There were no tears or tantrums and on that first session the children moved to their new activities with enthusiasm.

A wonder to behold

The results have been fantastic. Children have sung, acted, performed, written, sewed, crafted, cut, stuck, jumped, run, competed, designed, planted, blended, sieved, glued, evaluated and published like never before. At the end of the six weeks we had finished products that were a wonder to behold. The *craftit* children created a quilt made of separate pieces that celebrated Heald Place's 100th anniversary. The "Golden *singit* Choir" has performed at celebration assemblies. The *constructit* gang designed and created a new school for Heald Place; 100 years from now. The *surviveit* club, in a Bear Grylls sort of way, learnt survival skills and den- making.

Open Futures Trust

Case Study Collection



But could we really claim that these new activities can be named *'Its'* or have we just jumped on the bandwagon and tagged them like friends on a selfie snapshot? What do these new *'Its'* have in common with our founding four?

Building blocks of skills awareness

Each of the new *'Its'* we created in Heald Place have a distinct learning journey to them. Just like *cookit, askit, growit and filmit* each of the *'Its'* lead children and their teachers through a series of experiences that introduce, initiate, consolidate, embed and extend successive building blocks of skills awareness. The children at the 'end' of their journey have travelled far and have a gift; an awareness and a new way of thinking that they will carry with them onto their next journey.

We often find ourselves almost romanticizing the end of the journeys that we go on; especially so in education. There always seems to be a target or level that we all set out to achieve. There are many, and some are difficult. The truth of the matter, though, is that life is not really so much about the destination, the ending place one arrives at, as it is about the pathway; the learning one takes away from the whole experience. The paths we take lead to a hundred more, as the process of discovery and learning are not short ones.

Something different

The *'It'* factor has been used to describe many things in our modern 21st Century society. In the past the 'It factor' might have been defined as someone with *je ne sais quoi*, or the indefinable something that makes someone special. Most often it is applied to celebrities or semi-celebrities that seem to radiate charisma, charm and talent. Our *'It'* factor is something different; it is something that will be around long after these shining star celebrities have burned brightest and then faded from our front pages.

Our *'It'* factor

An *'It'* creates a bedrock; a sturdy foundation that acts as a catalyst into new endeavour. The skills learned ripple throughout the children's education and they begin to underpin a new framework for learning. They provide a structure to a shared experience that the children may never have encountered before. Within this we find ourselves changing our pedagogy so that new lessons are crafted to encapsulate this ethos.

This is our 'It' factor

- ***Intelligent Thinking***
- ***Imagination Transforming***
- ***Inspiration Transfer***

A new paradigm for learning?

Open Futures Trust Case Study Collection



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The photograph above shows **'exhibitit'** – another 'It' developed in school, where children created art work each week, built up a collection and opened an exhibition for parents and governors at the end of 6 weeks.



"Could we really claim that these new activities can be named 'Its' or have we just jumped on the bandwagon and tagged them like friends on a selfies snapshot?"

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