A few years ago, the site of Charlton Manor’s Secret Garden was overgrown and derelict. Today it is a tranquil haven with raised beds, vegetable patch, greenhouse, pond, bird hide, teaching shed, chickens and an observation beehive. This transformation came about after the Head Teacher invited children to work with local garden designers to create a new plan for the ¼ acre plot.

**Who Does The Gardening?**

The School Gardener and a Teaching Assistant lead 2 lunchtime sessions, open to all, plus 3 after school clubs which children can sign up for. All 430 children will access the garden during their time at Charlton Manor.

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**Eating & Cooking**

Salads and vegetables are used for school meals and honey, eggs, surplus fruit and veg are sold to parents from the school’s “Sweet Pickings” stall in the playground. The garden also supplies the Let’s Get Cooking Club.

**National Curriculum**

The garden is written into every curriculum plan for all subjects.

**Funding**

Miracle Grow, Asda, Lend Lease and Hosalock have donated essentials. Grants received from Capital Growth, Children’s Fund, Co-Op and Barclays.

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**Successes**

In 2012 Charlton Manor led a group of Greenwich schools to grow cut flowers for the Chelsea Flower Show. Their exhibit won a Silver Gilt medal and Charlton Manor children met the Queen for the 2nd year running.

**Challenges**

Having spread the workload across the whole school community, Charlton Manor has avoided the usual manpower challenges. During the holidays the school’s Premises Manager covers watering, and cares for the chickens and bees.

**Whatever next**

Plans for a teaching kitchen are taking shape and the Head would like to establish a Schools Horticultural Show.

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**What we Grow**

- Onions
- Garlic
- Peppers
- Mulberries
- Raspberries
- Broad beans
- Salad
- Sweetcorn
- Beetroot
- Spinach
- Beans
- Peas
- Strawberries

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**Top Tip**

Choose early and late varieties that crop during term time so the children don’t miss out on the fun of harvesting.