

# Learning for Sustainable Futures: Project Summary

## Who was involved?

Mhara Brown (Science teacher and Outdoor Learning lead), Kirsty Thomson (Food, Nutrition and Textiles teacher and Sustainability lead), S1 Outdoor Learning Skills Academy class and members of the Eco Group.



## The Learning Context

Queensferry High School is located in South Queensferry and has over 1,200 pupils. When the current building was completed in 2020, there was no clear space allocated to gardening and growing and the greenhouse collapsed very quickly! Since then, staff in FNT and Science have been keen to get a school garden up and running to help the learning and teaching of sustainability.

Senior leadership reached out to local businesses to develop a space for interdisciplinary outdoor learning, with a focus on growing food for use across the school. Cala drew up some designs for a space, and Mite then helped to level the ground and put down bark. The local Rotary Club and Greenferry groups have helped to build the planters and seating areas.

## SECONDARY PHASE: Queensferry HS

### Learner Outcome Focus: Pupil Voice

*[I have collaborated on investigations into the process of photosynthesis and] I can demonstrate my understanding of why plants are vital to sustaining life on Earth.*

**Curriculum for Excellence:**  
HWB 2/3/4-34a; HWB 2-35a;  
HWB 3-37a; SCN 3/4-02a;  
SCN 3-03a

### Related initiatives:

[Learning for Sustainability:  
Action Plan 2023-2030](#)  
[GTCS Professional Standards  
for Registration](#)  
[Eco-Schools Scotland](#)

## Queensferry High School's School Garden

Queensferry's new school garden was set up to allow our young people to grow their own fruits and vegetables, and to help demonstrate the process of growing and using our own produce. We wanted to create an outdoor space that can be accessed by all; a space that promoted wellbeing as well as being somewhere for pupils to learn about the environment around them.

Our biggest barrier has been in getting the groundwork completed and building the infrastructure required, such as fences and raised beds. We have had support from local companies to design the garden and then level the ground, and the local Rotary Club have stepped in to help build the planters and fencing.

Pupils have been excited to get the chance to grow their own food and look after the plants. The pupils have started to learn about growing seeds and what plants need at the different stages of their development. Staff have been learning about garden design and set up and how to make sure this project is sustainable for the future.

## Evidence and Impacts

Our pupils are already really excited about getting out into the garden and growing their own fruit and vegetables. They have shared, both in the interviews recorded for the video and in class, how much they have enjoyed what we have done so far. Two pupils even asked if they could stay out to work in the garden instead of going to their next class as they were enjoying being outdoors and making a difference.

Being part of a Community of Practice has helped shape our School Garden project by giving us a space to exchange ideas, learn practical sustainability skills, and get feedback from other educators. The shared insights and encouragement strengthened our planning and made our approach to building the garden more informed and purposeful.

## Next steps

At the time of filming, we were at the very early stages of our garden project. We have identified groups of young people that will be able to use the garden in future sessions and we are looking forward to working with a wider group of pupils and staff. We also hope to have more community engagement in the future.

The garden is designed to be as sustainable as possible, with lots of space to grow plants on a yearly basis and some that will grow all year round.

We have plans to extend the garden over time. We aim to add in a pond and wildflower area, and we hope to introduce some beehives and start delivering a beekeeping course for pupils.



From QHS project film

## Practitioner Reflections

*Sustainability must sit at the heart of what we do to ensure the future generations have what they need and the planet is healthy. I have enjoyed this professional learning experience and it has made me realise that the small changes can and will make a difference.*

*We have been really fortunate to have local groups support our garden and now we have space to plant and grow our own fruits and vegetables we are excited for how this space will be used going forward.*

**-Mhara Brown**

*This experience has broadened my understanding of what meaningful sustainability looks like in a school setting. My biggest takeaways were the importance of embedding sustainability into everyday learning, the power of student-led action, and the value of connecting with wider communities to share ideas and resources. The course helped me see our school garden not just as a project, but as a living learning space where students can explore systems thinking, environmental responsibility, and real-world problem-solving. It reinforced that small, practical steps can create long-lasting change when they're rooted in collaboration and purpose.*

**-Kirsty Thomson**