

# It's A Bug's Life

John Ruskin School

February 2016

## John Ruskin School Pond

John Ruskin School is situated just off the Walworth Road in South East London.

Over the past eight years, we have been working to transform our school gardens into productive growing spaces. We aimed to create areas that are rich in flora and fauna, so that our children have hands-on opportunities to learn about the natural world and to know where some of the food they eat comes from.

We are an Inner-London school, so most of our children do not have gardens and at school we have very little purpose build garden space. However, over the years we have all worked hard to find ways to make our school as green and beautiful as we possibly can.

We have worked closely with various organisations (school food matters, garden organic, RHS) to enhance our knowledge and the experience that they bring to the children. We are now an RHS 5 school.

Back in 2008 we started our horticultural journey by creating gardening spaces for our nursery and reception gardens. The following year we created a roof garden and each year we have taken on a new project whether it be 'bee friendly' barrels or fruit trees in pots.

This latest project developed our only green space on site and we created a woodland area and wildlife pond. The site also accommodates a lovely old horse chestnut tree.

In one corner is the new wildlife pond and in another corner our compost bays. This project created a wildlife pond and bog garden so the children have the opportunity to reserve ecology in their own school. We planted up the area with a variety of woodland plants so the children now play amongst and observe a woodland eco system.

There are many reasons why we are on our horticultural journey and why we want to keep going. It definitely enhances the educational experience and language. The gardens not only feed the children but they also feed their knowledge of the natural world. This project helped the children to learn to respect and take care of their environment, to understand how it works and above all the upkeep of the pond and gardening makes us all really happy.

Staff, Children & parents of John Ruskin School