## Case Study

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<tr>
<th>Establishment name:</th>
<th>Astley Park School</th>
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<td>Award granted:</td>
<td>Innovative Practice</td>
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<td>Project title:</td>
<td>'Plot to Pot'</td>
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### Project summary

- The project was to encourage parents to work with their children to learn how to grow fruits and vegetables and learn how to cook easy, nutritional and enjoyable food at very low cost using basic ingredients - Giving the whole family a shared interest, light exercise and basic cooking knowledge.
- The project would also raise awareness of childhood obesity and ways in which this type of activity would help to identify and reduce this at an early age.
- To start, the families worked together making easy soups and puddings using basic ingredients such as windfall apples and vegetables, Some of which are readily available within the school grounds.
- They were then shown basic growing skills using a variety of easily obtained containers in which to plant. This was a “hands on” activity and easy to copy at home.
- The families had lots of fun, made new friends, talked to others and started to enjoy their children.
- We listened to our members and adapted the club to meet their needs, creating a "drop in" computer club and social events for the families.
- The impact was staggering, families gained in confidence, worked together and started to enjoy a healthy lifestyle together.
- During the time that we have been running this scheme, we have been amazed at the difference such a small intervention programme has achieved. We have taken very small steps, listened to what the club members have had to say and changed or developed as necessary. We introduced an ICT "drop in" for members to learn how to search the internet, make spreadsheets and produce leaflets and promotional materials for events. The club has gone from strength to strength and we are watching in disbelief as the families are pulling together, laughing together, working together, cooking together, the list goes on and on. Parents/carers are beginning to enjoy their children, want to be part of what they are doing and most importantly listening to them.
**What were you hoping to achieve?**

- In its early stages the project was to emphasise working together to produce and make good wholesome healthy food from very little money. There was an emphasis on family team work, fun and gentle exercise. Basic cooking skills were demonstrated to produce meals which were not only economical but enjoyable to make and eat.
- Families would be able to meet new friends, share experiences and ideas and have an enjoyable, productive hobby that could provide gentle exercise, a healthier diet and lifestyle. This would also provide the opportunities for families to grow, cook and eat together, thus promoting discussion, interaction and hopefully lots of fun and enjoyment.

**How did you identify the need for this practice?**

We have a large number of disadvantaged children, and through the club we hoped to target Healthy Eating, parental involvement and a shared family interest.

**Briefly describe the main characteristics of the school?**

- There are 144 pupils, all with statements for SEN.
- Pupils have a wide range of complex learning needs: Autism, severe learning difficulties, physical difficulties and social, emotional and communication difficulties. The school has over 40% free schools meals eligibility.

**What did you do?**

Meeting called to discuss "Plot 2 Pot"
Grant Application- IDSS grant successful
Start of project-Tuesday evenings 3.45-5.30
Club expands - moving to two groups
Social Event- The club had its first social event where everyone sits down to a carvery meal and then the children enjoy the ball pool whilst the parents chat and socialize.
Fund Raising - the club decided to raise funds
ICT - extra session Monday evening for ICT introduction.
Successful Chocolate Party ran by club.

Distinct difference in parenting skills.
Distinct difference in family working together.
Distinct difference in Healthy Eating and Awareness

RHS -"Get your Grown Ups Growing" runner up
Chairman's Challenge Winner 2012 - Short Stay/Special School
Its Our Planet - Innovation winner 2012
Lancashire Evening Post - Secondary School Winner 2011

Families gaining in confidence/working together

Reports from children at club
Which members of the establishment and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role?

The families currently accessing this service are in great need of help, advice and interaction with other families in similar situations. Through the club, some of these families are finding fresh inspiration, talking to others helps them realise that they are not alone and there are ways to address this. They are also having FUN as a family, without spending any money. This is of great importance to some of these families, a social event away from home and school where they can chat, have fun and interact with their children and other families without spending much-needed money. Healthy options, lifestyle and gentle exercise compliment these activities. Mrs. Broughton (Environmental Studies) and Mrs. Forrest (Food Technology) provide the strategies for dealing with their children (as we do in class) and the parents/carers are following our lead, listening to their children and learning how to use interaction as a tool.

How has the progress of the project been monitored and evaluated?

- Through the IDSS monthly monitoring sheets.
- Evaluation from members of the club.

How has the practice been modified or improved during development?

- Due to ever increasing numbers, the club has had to split into groups.
- ICT lessons are available as a drop-in on Monday evenings.
- Parents/carers are becoming more involved in school life, more confident in dealing with their children and sharing their problems and concerns with others.
- Club members are anxious to hold Fund Raising Events which will enable more social events.

What has been the impact of the project on pupils’ learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?

- Pupils are interacting with mainstream pupils, older, younger and from different backgrounds and cultures.
- Pupil’s behaviour at home has improved in 95% of families, with parents improving skills.
- Pupils are now listened to by parents who share their interest.
- Lone parents are making new friends and feel less isolated.
- Families are more confident and leading much healthier lifestyles.

What are the next stages in the development process?

- The club members are being allowed to have their own allotment in the school grounds. This will enable more family interaction and a shared interest outside of school.
- There are now more than 18 families who are wanting to take part in this scheme, which allows siblings, grandparents and partners to be involved. The whole family will work together and grow their own vegetables and fruit in return for helping with the school allotments.
- ICT using spread sheets and costings. The club also would like to make their own cookery book and sell it at the Christmas and Summer Fairs.
- Cooking using microwaves and small appliances. Making jams and preserves, drying herbs and learning to grow peppers and chillies are some of the requests from the club.

**What aspects of this practice may be useful for other establishments to consider?**

Listen to your club members and adapt the club to their needs. Be flexible and make the whole experience fun. Social evenings where the whole family can participate without cost are an absolute must. Challenges which are simple, yet involve the whole family are a good way for everyone to be involved and this instigates discussion for the group.