

ORMISTON DENES ACADEMY – ECO-GARDEN PROJECT

I would like to tell you about Ormiston Denes Academy's eco-garden project, for which we would very much like to ask you if there is any local council funding or grants available for a contribution towards its transformation and sustainability, please. We would be very grateful for any donation towards Stage 1 (£2,400) or Stage 3 (£6,480) of our project, if possible, please.

Where we are now: In January 2022 students formed an Eco-Council and looked at ecology and biodiversity improvements that could be made at their academy. They registered for the Eco-Schools Green Flag Award, an international accredited education programme, that prompted them to explore sustainability and climate change and act. They conducted an environmental review, assessing how eco-friendly their school was reviewing everything from the school's recycling practices, to energy usage, to how environmental themes are covered in classrooms. In July 2022 we earned our Green Flag Award and proudly fly the flag at the front of our academy. This acknowledges our amazing work in making our school more environmentally friendly and raising eco-awareness in fellow pupils and their families and friends.



During this work we discovered, on the school grounds, a disused garden. It's a beautiful area and has so much potential for all students, staff, local community, family, and friends. It's currently very overgrown and needs an overhaul:



REDACTED
Ormiston Denes Academy
7th October 2022

Our Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) students currently try to use this area, mainly on a one to one basis, and they would love to link up with the Eco-Council students and transform the garden into a tranquil, beautiful eco-garden that everyone can benefit from including our local wildlife. The garden project will have a great impact on SEND interventions delivered to our most vulnerable students and once finished it will benefit the interventions with a space to calm and deliver in an outside area. The 4 broad areas of SEND are: communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional, and mental health difficulties; sensory and/or physical needs, and our vulnerable students have barriers in their learning around these areas of development. Our eco-garden project will enhance all of these areas for these students.

The 17 Eco-Council Members have tried to gain extra support for the big transformation, they ran an enrichment fayre and 35 students signed up to help us. They have also offered their parents/carers, friends, family to support us. The local community, and businesses will also be asked if they would like to join in the big clear-up and renovation.

Where we want to get to: Our dream eco-garden will have many environmentally friendly areas: wildlife garden, pond area, grow our own vegetables, fruit and herbs, workshop/classroom, relaxing, reflection and sensory area, entertaining area, and all surrounded by colourful flowers, shrubs, and plants. The students have been told that if they reach their goal, their reward for all their hard work will be to make their own clay pizza oven and eat some food they grow from seed on their pizzas! The pupils are very passionate and committed to making a difference.

Once completed our eco-garden will be opened to the whole school, local community, local businesses, family, and friends. The areas can be utilised for learning and enjoying which will promote individual mental health and well-being.

Eco-Council members are looking forward to involving our SEND students and working together to make a beautiful, calming, open-air area to learn in.

Our aims and outcomes:

1. Everyone involved will increase their knowledge and skills in landscape gardening. Once cleared, the design and planning of the project will be led by our students.
2. Enhanced individual mental health, well-being, youth social action and great friendships will be formed.
3. Whole school and local community involvement, before, during and after with support achieving aspirations.
4. Peaceful area for SEND students to learn and flourish.

Many of our students do not have gardens at home, they reside in an area of high deprivation and almost 60% are Pupil Premium (free school meals) and this project will give them a beautiful outside area, within the safety of their school grounds, that they can use for educational and social collaboration. They will learn many new skills and develop their knowledge and understanding of eco, biodiversity, landscaping, carpentry, gardening, and working in a team etc. The staff and local

supporters will also enjoy this, and everyone will experience a massive sense of achievement; it started with just an idea and ended in complete reality!

We can't wait to start digging!

What it is going to cost: For their expertise, skills, knowledge, and education we would like to network and have support from Greener Growth, a local community interest company that takes neglected areas and makes them food-producing and biodiversity enhancing - <https://greenergrowth.co.uk/> They work in schools, prisons and other community settings and with businesses and private households to provide makeovers and the profits they raise are used to support other community projects. Their website has some wonderful local projects that they have planned and developed; these have inspired us to work with them. They will provide us with diarised sessions, teaching aims and outcomes to help children develop their understanding of the natural world and have suggested we do the transformation in 3 stages. If we were successful to receive funding from Nineveh Trust, it will be used for Stage 2 of our project:

Stage 1: - October Half Term to February Half Term 2022 – 6 teaching sessions with material spend for wood and soil to create new growing areas, fix areas that are in need, tidy the current polytunnel and create rainwater capture and compost areas:

- £300 per session = £1,800 (ex VAT)
 - Material costs £100 per session = £600
- TOTAL £2,400**

Stage 2: - From March, weekly Eco-Garden Club - after school and holiday clubs at Easter, Whitson, and summer holidays and if possible, within school provision:

- 18 sessions, £300 each = £5,400 (ex VAT)
 - Material costs £40 per session = £720
- TOTAL £6,120**

Stage 3: - Continued school improvement with other areas in the school identified for development e.g., tree canopy. A further 18 Eco-Garden Club sessions and 9 holiday club sessions:

- 18 after school clubs £150 per session = £2,700 (ex VAT)
 - 9 holiday club sessions at £300 each = £2,700 (ex VAT)
 - Material costs per session £40
- TOTAL £6,480**

Grand Total £15,000

We have started to raise funds having stalls at school fetes and any other relevant opportunities. Any funding we could apply for would be incredibly beneficial for our project, as we would really like to start Stage 1 as soon as possible.

How we align with strategic aims: We believe this project meets the below strategic aims and objectives for funding applications:

- **The health, welfare, and education of the general public** – *students, families, friends, staff, and outside agencies want to be involved and learn new skills and knowledge from each other. Once the eco-garden is transformed everyone will be able to utilise the environmentally friendly, calming space.*

- **The study and appreciation of agriculture, silviculture, ecology, and land management** – *once we have cultivated the garden, we will hold workshops and grow our own crops. We have some trees already, but we intend to grow our canopy all around the school. We already have a pond that will be developed further for ecology with our wildlife area.*
- **The study and appreciation of land and estate management that encourages conservation of the countryside** – *we will enjoy education through Greener Growth from clearing the site through to transforming it into our eco-garden. We want to conserve and make sustainable our eco-garden, welcome local wildlife and make an impact on the conservation of our countryside.*

It is a huge project, and the students are so keen to work very hard and achieve their aspirations, hence why we are asking if you could possibly consider us for a funding grant, please so we could begin Stage 1 of our project.