



**Kate Sheldon MPhil., MSc. (Hons)**

**Development Director / Deputy Chief Executive, Trees for Cities**

- What is an Edible Playground?
- Why are they needed?
- How we measure the impact
- Case Study: Hitherfield Primary

# What is an Edible Playground?

**Gourds**  
Walkways will be constructed from steel reinforced mesh and planted-up with a variety of gourds. As the gourds grow they will climb and be supported by the steel mesh.

**Vertical growing systems**  
Different vertical growing systems will be constructed from recycled and new materials and placed along the wall. They will be planted with a mix of soft fruits and herbs.

**Design development**  
Inspiration was drawn from Barbara Hepworth's sculptures as well as abstract stained glass windows. The repetition of the lateral and vertical steel support systems and abstract layout of beds through the design will give a contemporary twist to the formal potager vegetable garden.

**Cordons**  
Apples, pears, cherries and plums will be planted in rows to create a soft green boundary that divides the areas. Archways will be constructed from timber and placed over entrances.

**Potatoes**  
Linear beds will be used for different types of potatoes e.g. early, mid and late.

**Espalier hedge**  
An espalier hedge will be used to create a soft green boundary to the Edible Playground.

**Herbs**  
A variety of herbs will be planted throughout the raised beds.

**Soft fruit garden**  
Formal beds laid out north to south, like rays of the sun, will be planted with gooseberries, blackcurrants, redcurrants and raspberries.

**Vegetable garden**  
Raised vegetable beds varying in height and size will be laid out in a grid pattern and constructed of oak sleepers. Having numerous beds will provide the opportunity to follow crop rotation, placing the same families together e.g. salad, roots, legumes, brassicas, cucurbits, potatoes and onion related crops. Different support systems using wood and wire frames will be used through the beds.

**Key**  
Cross

Infant school building





# Issues our children face

Childhood obesity 'an exploding nightmare', says health expert



Three-quarters of UK children spend less time outdoors than prison inmates - survey



- 30% of children leaving primary school in the UK are overweight or obese (School Food Plan, 2013)
- “Nature Deficit Disorder” (National Trust, 2012)

# National Curriculum for Primary schools in England (2013)

## Design & Technology: **Cooking and nutrition**

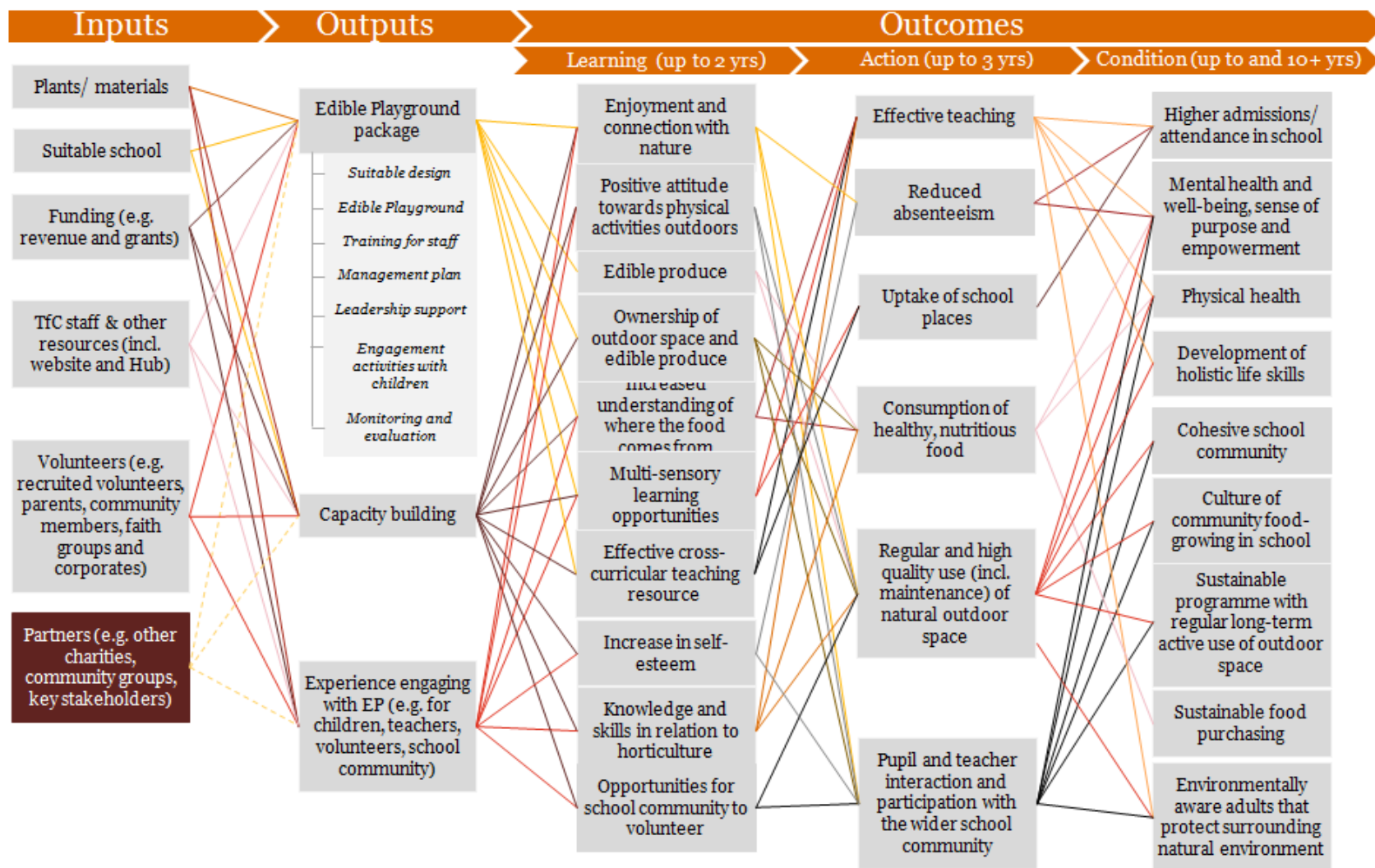
*“Learning how to cook is a crucial life skill that enables pupils to feed themselves and others affordably and well, now and in later life”*

- Understand where food comes from
- Understand seasonality and how food is grown

# Measuring the Impact

- 50 Edible Playgrounds in six UK cities
- Focus towards areas of deprivation
- Impact evaluation framework validated by PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Tested through monitoring of projects (2014 - 2016)
  - Predicted pupil outcomes within two years included **learning about healthy eating** and **opportunities for outdoor learning**
  - Baseline and follow-up surveys with 1,600 pupils and 200 teachers from 12 urban schools

# Edible Playgrounds Impact Framework



# Key findings and results - Healthy Eating

- 93% teachers stated that Edible Playgrounds had positive impact on pupils' **attitude towards healthy eating** (n=54)
- 77% said that Edible Playgrounds had moderate / significant impact on children's **willingness to try fruit and vegetables** (n=54)
- 83% pupils said that they **enjoyed eating the food** that they grew “a lot” or “a bit” (n=1,074)



# Key findings and results – Well-being

- 75% teachers said that the Edible Playground had positive impact on the development of **social skills**
- 71% head teachers said that Edible Playgrounds has assisted their work with **children with special educational needs or challenging behaviour**
- 91% pupils said that they like being in the Edible Playground “a lot” or “a bit”. The top emotions that pupils said they feel in the Edible Playground were **“happy”, “excited”, “interested”, “calm”**
- 68% teachers surveyed agreed that pupils benefit from learning outdoors. Results showed, however, that lessons in the Edible Playground only occur 1-6 times per year at most schools



# Hitherfield Primary School, Lambeth





# What works well

- Leadership from school senior management
- Teach through gardening
- Integrate into school curriculum



A pair of hands is shown holding several ripe, red strawberries. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with the fingers gently cupping the fruit. The background is a dark, textured surface covered in small, colorful confetti in shades of pink, red, and teal. The overall lighting is soft and natural, highlighting the texture of the strawberries and the skin of the hands.

**Thank you!**

**[kate@treesforcities.org](mailto:kate@treesforcities.org)**

**[www.edibleplaygrounds.org](http://www.edibleplaygrounds.org)**

**[www.treesforcities.org](http://www.treesforcities.org)**