



Newsletter

Autumn 2: December 2021

We come to the end of 2021 and it has been a busy and successful term. We would like to thank students, staff and parents for their continued hard work and support in ensuring the successes at Sunfield.

You will be aware that Ofsted visited the school recently and we were delighted to share with them the strengths of the school and the progress that continues to be made. Their feedback was positive and we will share the full report as soon as it is published.

Advent Spiral



Sunfield Advent Spiral was held in our weekly Assembly Festival slot so our young people can experience the rhythmic benefits of these community gatherings. We held it for three groups due to the current COVID situation, and by the end we had some very special moments of collective peace as the lights were dimmed to reveal the picture of the spiral of candles shining in the darkness (everything in the festival leads to this special moment). It never fails to be moving as our young people make the journey from the periphery via the spiral to the point (the central candle), many surprising us with their independence and focus in this special moment. There is so much warmth, spirit, life and pedagogy in the Advent festival.

Sunfield Shop and Social Enterprise

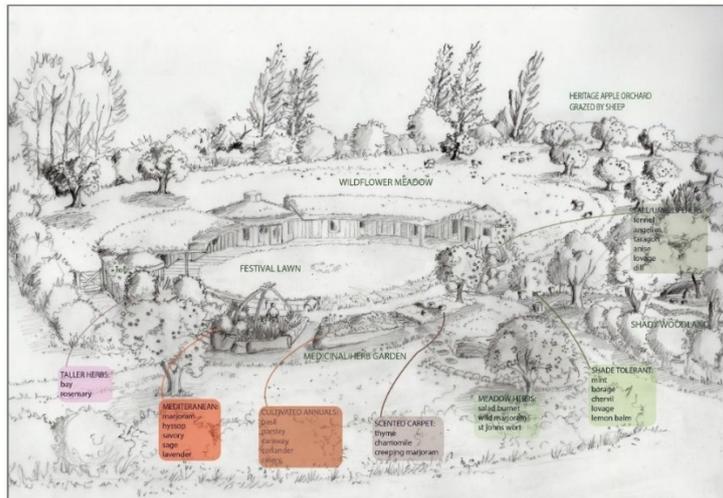


We continue to develop the Sunfield Farm shop, increasing the variety of produce sold, much of which is from our own land and grown with tutors and students. We have worked with our residential team to extend the produce sold and are now selling Weleda products, method cleaning products, Ruskin Mill College Bio-dynamically farmed trout and ingredients needed to create a number of our favourite recipes, as decided by the children and young people of Sunfield.

A new Lower School for Sunfield

The trustees of Sunfield and those of Ruskin Mill Trust have agreed a new lower school development plan, and other extensive upgrades for the site over the next couple of years. Outline planning permission has now been submitted for the entire project and we will send further updates as they arrive.

The sketch below, of the new Sunfield Garden School in the landscape illustrates both the therapeutic and environmental context for the school's location.



The New Social Calendar

“A healthy social life is found only, when in the mirror of each soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the whole community the virtue of each one is living.”

Festivals, play and social events give a value to the community at Sunfield, and over the past term we have brought a sense of rhythm and anticipation into the day for our children beyond the school day; enriching the 24-hour curriculum. If the past 18 months has taught us anything, it is not to underestimate the power of interaction, and the joy this can bring. This is particularly vital for the young children and adults. Play and social events are an important part of their growing up.

Throughout Sunfield we celebrate festivals, these have been interwoven within Sunfield life and the cycles of nature. Within care and education, we have found our own rhythm to bring to Sunfield, celebrating differences, seasonal events and enjoying the activities on a weekly basis that bring a smile and a sense of togetherness.



Story telling by the fire

We have seen each child as an individual thrive when they have been supported by the community events that we have held. Each individual contribution, is what makes our community stronger and deepens the awareness and understanding we hold towards each other. Through the commitment of the staff and students, and the daily work that they invest into making the social events successful, a culture is created that everyone wants to be part of and contribute to.

This past term we have begun to sew a tapestry of memories, as we care for each child and aim to allow children to enjoy their childhood. We rejoice in a strong and diverse team of specialists across Sunfield who hold different beliefs and experiences, but through the weekly social events we are able to acknowledge a living connection with our community. We will be sharing our social events calendar on the website and through monthly newsletters.

Sunfield's Wool and Plant Workshop



As part of Sunfield's continuous quest to add resources for the development of our curriculum, we are happy to share that we have built a new wool-work and houseplant workshop and have wool-working sessions on the timetable for the spring term. The workshop is in a formerly disused room next to our pottery workshop and the space has been transformed into a warm and welcoming environment for our learners. We have moved our loom into the space and Anna, the recently appointed wool tutor, has even sourced a pedal-powered sewing machine.

This new workshop will allow us to bring an extra dimension to our experiential curriculum. Anna has already held an open house during which the different classes visited and it was wonderful to see how excited and curious all of the learners were

about the different areas of the workshop. Imagine how they felt when a door they walk past every day suddenly opened, revealing a magical space within! Working with wool and seeding, growing, and potting plants will provide new opportunities for our learners to have new experiences and to contribute to their community. The space will also enable us to create new products for our Farm Shop, furthering the connection of our learners to the wider community. We plan on holding events and even visiting craft fairs and farmers' markets with the products that we make in the workshop.

We feel that this new educational resource provides another step for our learners to achieve their outcomes and aspirations and are looking forward to sharing with our community further developments in our curriculum as Sunfield continues to grow.



Finally, we wish all of the Sunfield community a very Merry Christmas and look forward to the New Year!

Sunfield Senior Leaders

<https://www.rmt.org/sunfield/>