



Case Study

Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh

WHY TAKE PART ?

The Garden had never taken part in Takeover Day, but the Head of Marketing approached the Schools Programme Manager and Education Officer for assistance. The Education Team were enthusiastic because, although the Garden is well known as a horticultural venue, they felt that it would be a great learning experience to work across teams to help increase the Garden's profile as a heritage venue.

WHO TOOK PART ?

The Education Team sent out targeted emails to upper primary, secondary and special needs classes in local schools. They also sent an email to Edinburgh City Council for additional distribution. Selection focussed on replies from individual teachers, as well as each school's proximity to the Garden. Twenty primary, 16 secondary and ten special needs children were selected from schools who rarely, if ever, participated in educational events at the Garden.

WHAT DID THEY DO ?

The students were given a variety of tasks in the visitor centre, the shop, the library, the publicity department and outdoors in the Garden.

HOW DID THEY SPEND THEIR TIME ON THE DAY ?

Students were placed following selection by their teachers using mini CVs. They were given job descriptions, lanyards, staff passes and (Garden funded) baseball caps. Children took on many roles including:

- Visitor Welcome Officers – ensuring visitors felt comfortable on their visit
- Catering Officers – for students interested in food preparation
- Education Officers – devising a trail to find Santa using snowflakes
- Graphic Designers – selecting six favourite garden locations and then producing a series of photos stamped 'Wish you were Here' for sale in the shop
- Photographers – producing a 'Plant of the Month' feature for the website
- Social Media Officers – creating an album of photographs on Facebook and sending tweets on Twitter
- Assistant Librarians – presenting to the public and interviewing a poet as part of Book Week
- Publishers – writing the 'Kids' Page' for the next edition of the Botanics Magazine
- Gardeners – clearing and planting in the Garden and helping to create a bee garden
- Park rangers – driving tractors (SEN children) and working alongside the tractor drivers to rake leaves
- Undercover inspectors – acting as 'mystery visitors' to assess other pupils

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT ?

Each school was given a feedback form to complete and extracts from these reports have been included in the Botanics Magazine. All children were given a family pass to return at a later date and show parents their work. All the children said that they enjoyed themselves – even the four secondary school pupils acting as undercover inspectors, who had initially labelled it 'boring.' The most positive feedback came from children who were interested in specific careers related to their Garden roles (e.g. catering in the café). Next year, the Education Team will request to see children's CVs in advance which will enable them to match interests to role. Staff were extremely impressed with the children and would welcome the event next year.