

# Sprouting success in the St Ronan's garden

## Plans take root to roll out gardening initiative across region

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GREEN-fingered pupils in Innerleithen are proving they are the cream of the crop when it comes to growing vegetables.

Since May, children at St Ronan's have teamed up with local social enterprise You Can Cook to plant, tend and harvest their garden. The Innerleithen Can Grow initiative, which is funded by the Climate Challenge Fund, is aimed at building and sustaining a growing project that is for both pupils and the wider community.

And last week local MSP Christine Grahame pulled on her wellies to give the children a hand.

St Ronan's head teacher Keith Belleville told us: "We



A few green-fingered pupils with Bosco Santimano and Christine Grahame.

were delighted to welcome MSP Christine Grahame to St Ronan's edible garden and it was great to be able to showcase the fantastic progress in the garden.

"Four of our pupils who have been involved in the project over the summer,

along with their parents, acted as the guides and were able to talk very authoritatively about the plants and the garden.

"We are really proud of the garden and the involvement of our pupils in its phenomenal development since its

inception only five months ago."

The project, which will run until March, 2016, has produced astounding results despite the late planting of many vegetables and herbs.

All of the plants are grown organically, without pesti-

cides or chemical fertilisers. And it is hoped similar growing projects can be rolled out to other schools in the area.

Bosco Santimano, founder of You Can Cook said: "We will be working closely with all stakeholders in the future to make sure we can support and help local communities, organisations and schools, replicate this project in their areas.

"A big thank you must go to head teacher Keith Belleville without whose help and support this project would not have got off the ground."

During her visit Ms Grahame was able to meet some of the pupils and their parents and she saw first hand all the hard work put into making this project a success. Ms Grahame has offered her support to You Can Cook in rolling out the project to other primary schools.