

## **(1) Growing Together: The Garden Story** (514 字/F-K Scale 4.0)

In a quiet town, there was a small elementary school filled with curious students. Among them was a fourth grader named Emma, who loved nature. She liked planting flowers in her backyard and watching them grow. But her school had only a dry patch of grass behind the cafeteria. Most students ignored it.

One day, Mr. Lee, the science teacher, made an exciting announcement.

“This year,” he said, “our school will grow a garden! We’ll plant vegetables, herbs, and flowers. But we need your help.”

Emma raised her hand. “Can we grow tomatoes and carrots? My grandma says they taste better when you grow them yourself.”

“Great suggestion, Emma,” said Mr. Lee. “Let’s start planning right away!”

The class came up with a list—lettuce, beans, sunflowers, cucumbers, strawberries, and mint. Students split into teams. Some dug the soil, others watered, and a few made colorful plant signs. Emma’s group painted a rainbow sign that read “Garden of Hope,” with bees and butterflies all around it. Every day at lunch, Emma and her friends visited the garden. They pulled weeds, checked the leaves, and wrote in garden journals. They measured the plants and drew pictures of the changes they saw.

“Look!” said Jamal. “The lettuce is getting big!”

“And the strawberries have flowers,” Emma added with a smile.

Soon, the garden became the heart of the school. Younger kids came to peek through the fence. Teachers brought their classes for science lessons. The garden was

growing fast—and so was everyone’s excitement. Then one afternoon, dark clouds filled the sky. Rain poured for hours, and strong winds blew across the yard. The next morning, students ran outside to check the garden.

“Oh no,” Emma cried. “Our signs are gone, and some plants are bent!”

Mr. Lee joined them. “Not everything is lost. Some plants are strong. Let’s help the others.”

The class fixed the garden beds, tied weak stems, and added covers to protect the plants. Parents donated gloves and tools. Emma’s grandma came in to teach composting using leaves, food scraps, and fruit peels. Later that week, local farmers visited. One showed them how to check if carrots were ready. Another explained how marigolds keep bugs away and why bees are good for the plants.

By spring, the garden was full of green leaves and colorful blooms. The school hosted a special Harvest Day. Emma’s class made salads, mint tea, and vegetable soup with their crops. They set up tables, played cheerful music, and welcomed families from the community.

“This cucumber is from our garden!” said Jamal proudly.

Emma smiled. “We planted and cared for these. Now we get to share them with everyone.”

Mr. Lee added, “This garden shows what happens when we care, learn, and work together.” That night, Emma wrote in her journal, “I used to be shy, but now I speak up and share my thoughts. I think the garden helped me grow too.”

From that year on, the school garden became a proud tradition. And Emma’s class was always remembered as the group who helped it bloom beautifully.