



The Importance of Planning

How professionals have implemented the Learning through Landscapes approach to improving spaces to learn and play.

There's more discussion and sharing of ideas! More creativity.

(Learning assistants – Borestone Primary)

The school

Borestone Primary in Stirling, Scotland, has approximately 300 pupils. The school provides students with many opportunities to learn new things and be involved in decision making. Their playground was redesigned using the LTL approach and now includes grassland, mounds, a sandpit, campfire area, stage, platforms and a growing area. They also incorporated an access path to a small wood nearby for outdoor learning.



Image – children at Borestone Primary engaged in their outdoor learning space

Key focus

Planning

Who was involved?

Staff, Parent Council, students and parent volunteers.



Image 1 – children in outdoor space, Image 2- children in lesson outdoors

Project overview

Borestone Primary benefits from extensive school grounds comprising a large tarmac playground, a very large area of flat grass, playing fields and an area of public woodland along one boundary. Prior to this project, there had been limited outdoor learning or development within the grounds. The grounds are openly accessible all year round.

Where are we now?

The staff and Parent Council identified the need to enhance the range of learning opportunities available to children of all ages, to make better use of the natural environment and to create opportunities for children to play freely in a creative and imaginative way.

Where do we want to be?

The group consulted the children and focused on identifying what they wanted to be able to *do* outside, and what *experiences* they wanted to have, rather than requesting a list of

standard play equipment or learning resources.

How do we get there?

A mixture of permanent landscape changes and temporary loose materials were identified to meet the needs expressed by children, staff and parents.



Image – close up of children engaged in conservation of dedicated space

Making the changes.

Connecting a tap indoors through an underground pipe to an outdoor tap by the sand area, ensures that teachers and children have access to a source of water for outdoor learning activities. Native tree planting, including fruit trees and willow (planted in the wetter part of the grounds), will grow to become a woodland – as well as enhance biodiversity and become a source of natural materials for play. Improving surfaces ensures year round access.

Next steps

Following the completion of the changes, teaching staff, support staff and children have been involved with developing a risk benefit assessment for the new resources and a simple maintenance plan – sharing the responsibility and ownership of looking after each other and the school grounds.

Key messages

- Taking the curriculum outdoors has increased with teaching staff making use of the grounds, the loose materials and the local environment.
- Parental involvement has been important throughout the project.
- Parents received communication in a variety of ways including an invitation to take part in an outdoor learning afternoon where the whole school were outside taking part in a variety of activities including phonics in the sand, environmental art, a deforestation debate and making leaf crowns.
- Introduce re-invented spaces and loose materials during class time.

Reflection

- Think of a lesson based activity, linked to the curriculum, that could help you survey a space for increased outdoor activities?
- Think of a design or art lesson that pupils could create to illustrate what they would like to do in a space?
- How might you involve parents?
- What social and communication skills could the pupils practice while making the changes?