

Ballycraigy Primary School

School Grounds Case Study

The pupils of Ballycraigy Primary School help design an exciting new playground area for all to use.



1. Why did you choose this particular project?

This project was chosen to develop the school playground as, although we have lots of space, further creativity was needed to allow the children to use it.

2. Did you integrate it in to the curriculum. How?

We were keeping in mind the new changes in the curriculum towards outdoor play and how we could develop more ideas for the children to play in. This is still developing!! It has been so exciting how the whole school uses the facilities-just watch them at break and lunchtime!

3. Did you encounter any problems and, if so, how did you overcome them?

Oh yes-it takes time. It took a couple of years to get the plans off the drawing board-we had a local garden centre make a design for us-and by the time all the different bodies of people were informed and their opinions taken on board it was finally completed last June!!

4. How did you encourage pupil participation? How did they have ownership of the project?

They were allowed input to the design drawings-all classes looked at it and gave their views-even the cleaners, the caretaker and any parents who were passing the school noticeboard!!

5. How did the pupils/whole school benefit from this project?

Just watch the children outside at break and lunch time!! Even in outdoor play for Foundation Stage-there is just so much to do with our new outdoor classroom.

- Storage for outdoor toys
- Outdoor classrooms made from logs
- Raising the canopy of old trees and putting new trails under the trees
- New raised beds for veggies and sensory plants
- New woodland paths and bark areas
- Planting of apple trees
- New greenhouse to be developed
- Wildflower mounds
- Minibeast areas

6. Did you receive any support from parents, staff or outside agencies? Did you have to source any funding?

We applied for an Awards For All grant and were successful in receiving a substantial sum. We also contributed as a school through a clothing bank situated in the school grounds. We have a community group that helps us maintain the grounds throughout the year.

7. Is there any advice you could offer to other schools embarking on a similar project?

Do it!! Children love the outdoors and we watch the benefits daily as they play and increase their knowledge of the environment.

8. Has doing this project driven other Eco-Schools ideas? What are your future plans regarding Eco-Schools?

Success breeds success-we won a further £3000 in a regional competition last June which will allow us to build a pond area and develop a woodland walk.

It also raises the profile of the school in the area which can sometimes have poor press-we are never out of the papers! The self-esteem of the children has certainly been raised and they have something more to report on at home.