



St Michaels and All Angels Infant School School Grounds NOW & FUTURE

Report from the Landscape Strategy Workshops – February
2020 and May 2021



Completed July 2021

Introduction

Two workshops were planned to support development of a Landscape Strategy for the school grounds, to guide how they develop, are used, designed and managed in the future.

This report summarises the main findings from the workshops to help the school review the outside learning environment and make positive change for pupils of all ages at the school

The workshops took place on the **28th February 2020, and May 2021**. The long break caused by COVID restrictions in place at the time. Facilitation of the events were provided by Catherine Eldred, Principal Landscape Architect of the Landscape Strategy Team, at Hampshire County Council.



Contents

This report summarises the main findings from the workshops taking place to help the school review the school environment.

"Where are we NOW?"

22 people attended Workshop 1 including Mr Bowen, Executive Headteacher of The Oaks CE Learning Foundation, Mrs Flynn, Head of School of St Michaels and All Angels Infant School, governors, parents, teaching and support staff, and pupils of all ages.

- **Rate the Space** ps 3-4
- **Key points** pg 5
 - Play, Socialising, Breaks and Lunchtimes
 - Outdoor Teaching & Learning
 - Natural Environment
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Welcome, arrival, access and circulation
 - Community and Context

"Where do we want to be?"

Through a staggered agenda all pupils, and teaching and support staff attended Workshop 2 which lead on from Workshop 1. On this occasion however we concentrated on looking to the future of the school grounds and how they could develop for the future.

- **Vision** pg 6
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Where are we NOW ?

Rate the Space—

Participants worked in groups to record their thoughts on a series of 13 cards, as illustrated below. Feedback was given to cover the range of cards. All cards were collected. The following pages show the record created, and which will be referred to as part of Workshop 2.



Location 1 is known as 'The Spiritual Garden' and it's designed to be a 'refreshing' space to where children can think freely. Some students suggest it feels 'magical' whilst others feel sad because it doesn't receive much use. It was given an average score of 5/10 for quality, but only 1/10 for how often it gets used. This may be because it's too far away from the playgroup to be used more by them too.



Location 2 is 'The Playground' and it's used at breaktime and lunchtime every day. It feels 'fun' but it's only used for running games as there's not much to do on it. It was rated as a 5/10 for quality but a 10/10 for usage as it's the 'main play area' for all the children.



Location 3 is known as 'The Shelter' or 'The Outdoor Classroom'. Children can read stories or play here when it rains. Another use is as a sitting area at some school events. Some feel like the space is 'too small' and there were suggestions that a picnic bench could be added. It received a score of 6/10 for quality; perhaps because it's 'not comfy' and an average score of 8/10 for how well it gets used as it's 'not practical'.

Location 6 is known as 'The Trim Trail' and it can be used for climbing and other games at breaktime. To most it feels 'fun', however a minority suggest it's 'a bit small' and 'too compact'. The quality score was 9/10 and it received the same score for how well used it is. It's very popular but can only be used in small groups.



Location 4 is 'The Grass Area' and it has several logistical purposes such as being a space for pupils to 'line up' and it's an access route to the toilets. It feels 'muddy and irritating' so the score for quality was 3/10. It is hoped that the drainage system in this area could be improved. An 8/10 was given for how well it gets used.



Location 5 is 'The Field' and it's used for playing football on in the summer months. It is a big 'open' space that also hosts running races when the track is painted. It scored 6/10 for quality and 7/10 for how well it gets used but this is very weather dependent.

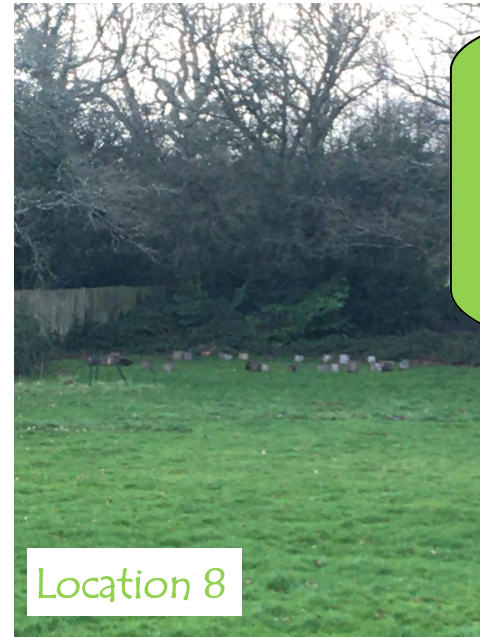


Where are we NOW ?...Cont'd



Location 7

Location 7 is 'The Field' and it's used as a play area for lots of different games. The pupils said it felt 'good', yet they only scored the quality as being 5/10. The score for how much it gets used was just one mark higher at 6/10.



Location 8

Location 8 is also 'The Field' and it's used for sports, reading books and finding minibeasts! Despite being an 'open' area, it feels 'boggy and muddy'. It's a lovely area but it's only used in good weather times which meant it scored 5/10 for quality. The same score was given for how well used it is as the primary use is in the summer months.



Location 11 is known as 'The Courtyard' or 'The Quad' and it's used for growing fruit and vegetables. It feels 'empty' and 'could do with brightening up'. A 6/10 was given for quality but only a 2/10 for usage as it's felt it could appeal to a wider audience, but currently isn't being used by many.



Location 9 is 'The Year 1 Playground' and it is used at playtime, and for some learning. It feels 'busy' as it is used every day by the reception children. The quality score was 7/10, however it is felt that some natural materials could be added to this area. The score for usage was a high 9/10 as it's an essential part of the EY curriculum.



Location 12 is 'The Football Pitch'. Some people suggested it felt 'unsafe', whilst others believe it's 'amazing'. It's only used by those that do play football, which meant it scored middle of the range 5/10 for both quality and usage.



Location 10 is 'The Drop-off/Pick-up Area' where parents collect their children at the end of the school day. Children use this area to play hopscotch, and sometimes it is used as an extra parking facility. It feels 'crowded' and it also seems like a bit of a 'waste of space' as there is not much to do. It received a quality score of 4/10 as "it's just a collection point". It was also scored low with 2/10 for how well it gets used.

Location 13 is known as 'Rosie's Garden' and it's used for growing and planting. It feels 'messy, underused and a bit sad'. The score for quality was 2/10 but this would be improved if it weren't so 'neglected'. The score for how well it gets used was 2/10 as it's not currently in a usable condition. It is hoped a revamp could be initiated to bring this area back to life.





Where are we NOW ?

Key points Participants worked together in groups to discuss how the grounds are currently used. Key points from the topics discussed are shown below.....

Access, Circulation, Arrival and Welcome

- Within the workshop there was a great deal of discussion on whether the Main Entrance to the school is in the best place. Access into the school is currently through a frontage space that is then rarely used for the majority of the rest of the day. It is also via the main road that was discussed concerning Health and Safety issues relating to the proximity to traffic. With all of that in mind, is there a possibility that an alternative access from Kings Close might be created taking much pupil and parent movement away from the busiest side of the school?

Play, Breaktimes and Socialising

- Although pupils do enjoy their break and lunchtimes it was thought by some at the workshop that there could be more for them to do in those times.
- The grounds are very large, however use of them is currently restricted due to the boggy conditions of the field which renders much of it unusable for much of the year. Pupils have dedicated spaces in which to play, but not freedom of the entire space to run freely and explore further.
- The toilets available to the children when they were outside were also mentioned as not like by many. Cold, and in a dark shade part of the site does not make them hugely popular to visit, and difficult to supervise by staff.

Health and Well Being

- Location of the school was discussed as concerns have been raised about the closeness of the main road that creates dust and noise pollution due to its proximity. Understandably any activities to the front of the school are more affected by this as against those that use the spaces further back.
- There are currently areas that encourage physical play, but due to being located on the field these are often out of bounds during the colder months due to the mud.
- It was said that there are currently few places for anyone to sit within the grounds that provide a place for peace and quiet.
- It was mentioned that an area to support imaginative play would be useful to have moving forward and that an area to "Grow your Own" fruit and vegetables would be good. The current area doesn't sadly get enough sun to be effective in its current location.

Outdoor Learning and Early Years

- It was agreed by many that outdoor learning activities take place mainly in the summer months, or in periods of dry weather.
- Year 1 sometimes use the Quad area for outside teaching and learning, the existing Outdoor Classroom sometimes gets used for Art activities, and Year R are always outside in their dedicated space enjoying the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
- It was mentioned however that there are some limitations in this happening more, such as the Year R area not being big enough to allow bike and trike riding to happen very often, which helps to develop gross motor skills in the children.
- The Field area is rarely used though as it was described as "having nothing there" to enable this to happen more, and currently nothing to encourage it.

The Natural Environment

- The first topic of conversation around this subject was how boggy and waterlogged the grounds currently get, and how the end of the field is rarely used for anything because of this.
- The grounds do get used for developing an understanding of the flora and fauna around them at the school though with Tree Identification work taking place with Year R, Minibeast Hunts, and development of a Wildflower Area in recent years. There was also talk that there is a fox that comes to visit the grounds at times throughout the year.

Context and Community

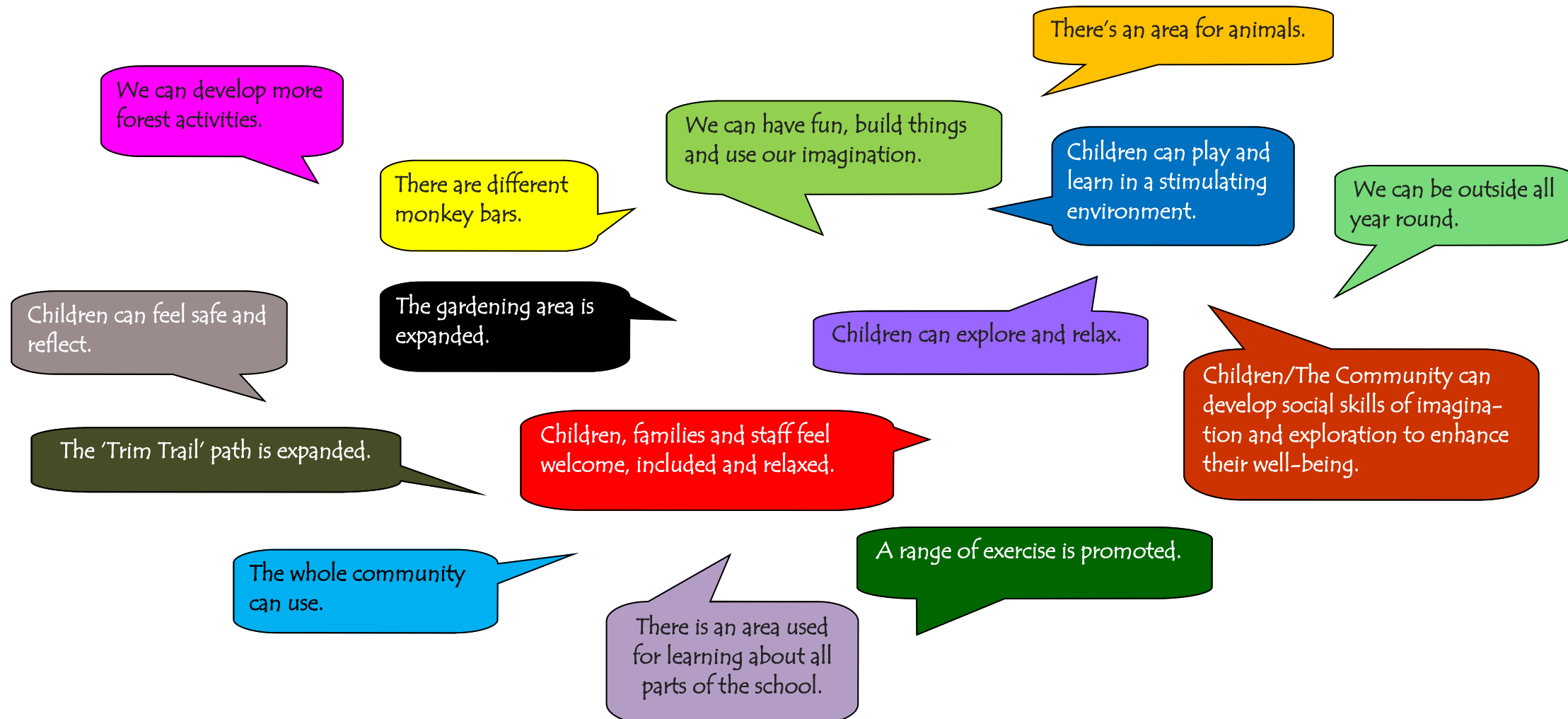
- The wider aspect of being a school within Lyndhurst is enjoyed by many with the lovely view of the church that can be seen from within the grounds. The church is also visited by pupils once a month and is very much part of school life.
- Extra curricular activities take place throughout the year with Duke of Edinburgh award camping often taking place on the field, and Den Building activities being organized and run by Graham, an active member of the school community.
- It was also said at the workshops that the frontage of the school is very 'closed' to the general public passing by, and that perhaps it could be more welcoming?



Where do we want to be?....

"Our Vision" – Participants worked individually to complete the sentence.....

"We would like our school grounds to be a place where....."



Where do we want to be?...

Future spaces

Participants then talked about the spaces they would like to be able to use within the grounds to make use of them more, and develop purposeful spaces throughout. The record of that discussion is shown below.....



St Michaels and All Angels Infant School, Lyndhurst

Completed — July 2021

Emerging Strategy Plan

Area 1: Environmental Learning Area

Ambition: Develop area to help support the curriculum learning in school and for the wider community, and to encourage the area to be an example of the wonderful context of the New Forest National Park

Ideas and Requirements:

- Discuss area further with all teaching staff to develop a plan on what the area could and should include, and what the zoned areas within the overall space could be.
- Encourage lesson planning to include use of the area for all aspects of the curriculum and for all ages within the school. Area to be considered as an additional classroom space for use throughout the year.
- ★ • Inclusion of a Celtic Roundhouse adjacent to the area to be used as a gathering space in all weathers and to support the experience of the wider Environmental Learning Area.

Area 2: Amphitheatre Space

Ambition: To create a warm and welcoming gathering space that can be used by children, parents, and the wider community.

Also available for the local church community to use too.

Ideas and Requirements:

- Area to be created using the existing landform of the space.
- Discuss design of the area further with all teaching and lunchtime supervisory staff to ensure it is an area that not only satisfies a use for learning, but also as a social space for children to sit with friends, to watch activity on the playground, and to play an important part in the emotional health and well being of all within the school community as a place in which to talk.

Area 3: Allotment Area for Growing and Planting

Ambition: Area to celebrate and encourage planting, growing and cooking of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Ideas and Requirements:

- Area to initially include a planting bed for each year group that can be planned, planted, nurtured and harvested by all pupils. Include pathway access and additional raised planting spaces so that children and adults of all abilities can use enjoy the space throughout the year.
- Discuss area further with the local community including the Totton Allotments, and the Minstead Flower Show to gain further advice, guidance and help in developing the area and working with the children.
- Discuss potential cooking projects with all teaching and lunchtime staff to plant and grow the ingredients needed to then enjoy eating later in the year.
- Area to potentially provide produce to sell at a school Farmers Market.

★ Area 10: Climbing Wall

Ambition: To provide an additional space for physical play during break and lunchtimes.

Ideas and Requirements:

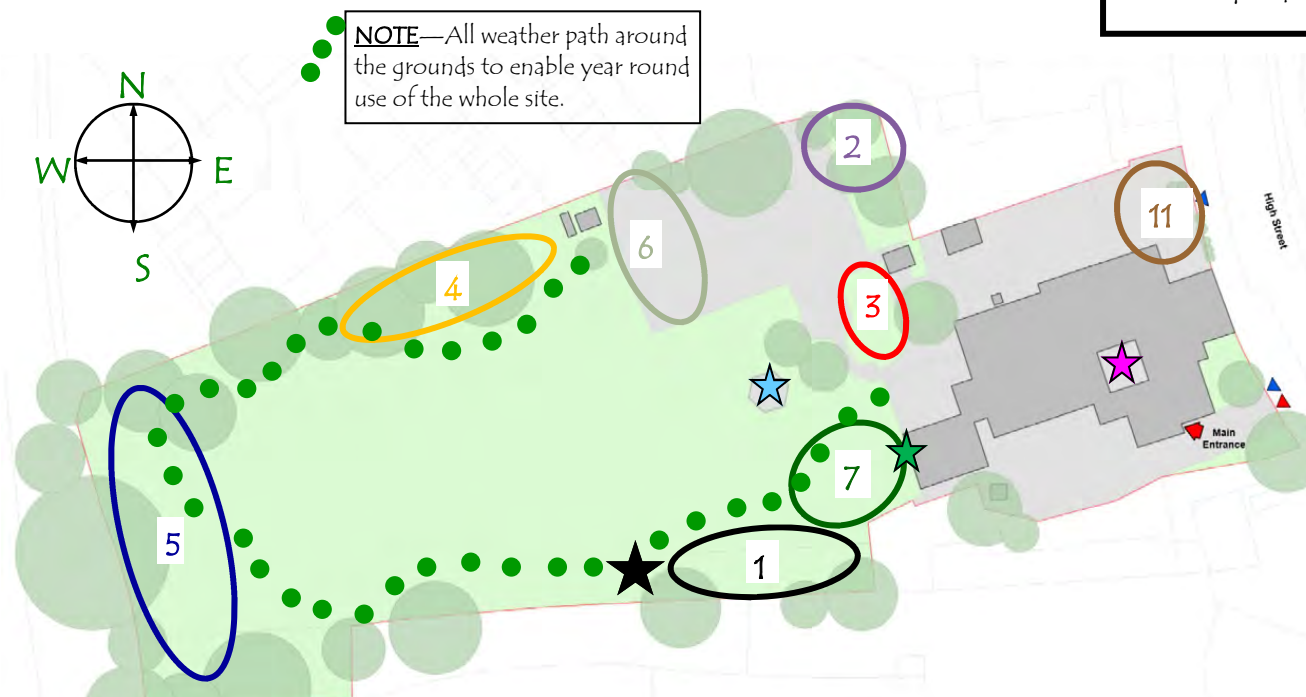
- Research companies that can provide the fixtures and fittings appropriately to provide a challenge for KS1 aged children.
- Lunchtime supervisors to be trained to encourage this activity.

Area 4: Natural Play Area

Ambition— To create an area that supports physical play and gross motor skill development for all pupils in the school.

Ideas and Requirements:

- Make arrangements to visit another HCC school to look at an area in practice.
- Area to be age appropriate for all children within the EY and KS1 age group at the school and for the equipment created to help to continue to develop their skills at climbing, balancing and upper body strength.
- Area to be designed to be in context with the natural qualities of the grounds.
- Space and equipment to be supervised and used appropriately with additional Play Leader training for all lunchtime supervisors to understand and embrace the use of this space throughout the year and in all weathers.



★ Area 8: Outdoor Library

Ambition: To develop an area that encourages reading for the children both within school time and also as an additional resource for parents to use before school time.

Ideas and Requirements:

- Area has direct access from the classrooms of Year R, and Year 2 and from the ELSA room to enable this space to be used as Nurture Space for all age groups in the school and with appropriate seating, shade and planting to create a beautiful, calm and restful space.

★ Areas 9: "The Chill Out Zone"

Ambition: To provide an alternative space where children who would like some time to enjoy some quieter activities can go to at break and lunchtimes.

Ideas and Requirements:

- Existing Outdoor Classroom to be re-named and resources stored within to support this play. Resources for colouring, drawing, board games and jigsaws etc.
- Area to be supervised accordingly as an area where only quieter activities take place and both Lunchtime Supervisors and Year 2 Play Leaders to be trained accordingly.

Area 11: Year 1 dedicated outside learning space

Ambition: To provide a dedicated outdoor learning space to support the Year 1 curriculum and to support all pupils moving on from the EYFS curriculum.

Ideas and Requirements:

- Discuss the area further with all Year 1 teaching staff to create a zoned area to include shade, seating, storage and a stage as well as additional learning opportunity.

Describing our ambition for the

Key Principles

- Development of the grounds to be in line with the School Values of Love, Respect and Compassion
- Also to inspire the Learning Values; Explore, Understand Others, Imagine, Push Yourself and Don't Give Up!
- To explore and celebrate our Christian distinctiveness with spirituality running throughout our school inside and out.
- To develop grounds that support the learning across the Federation and create unique spaces that enhance the learning of children at all 3 schools.

Area 5: Arboretum

Ambition: Create a rich woodland resource that all 3 schools can use to enhance learning, plus create additional experience to the health and well-being of all who visit the school.

Ideas and Requirements:

- Explore and discuss further the tree and additional woodland understorey planting needed to create a rich and diverse woodland structure in the area.
- Careful planning of the area with the drainage issues taken into account to be put in place, and a careful management and maintenance plan to also be included.
- Discuss development of this area further with both HCC Property Services Management Surveyor, plus local links with Hilliers Arboretum and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

Area 6: Designated Ball Play area

Ambition: To create a hard surfaced and fenced space that enables year round ball sport to be enjoyed.

Ideas and Requirements:

- Designated appropriately sized space to enable year round ball sports (including football) to be played without taking over the entire playground.
- Discuss appropriate surfacing and fencing details further with HCC Landscape Team.

Areas 7: Loose Material Play




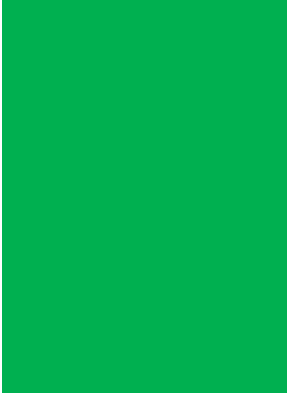



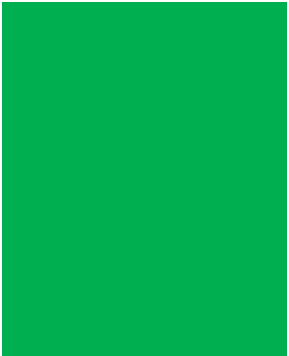
Ambition: Develop an area of creative play where the children can enjoy developing their team building skills, their creativity and their independent play skills further.

Ideas and Requirements:


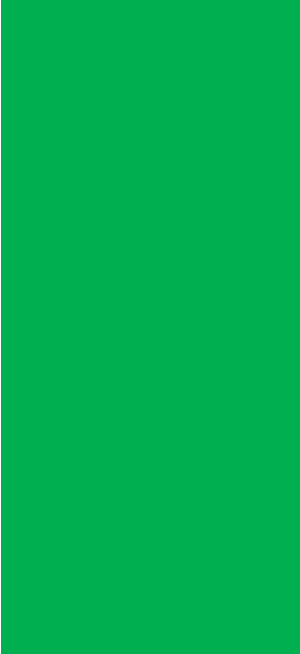
- Explore the ideas around Loose Material Play further to both share the idea more widely within the school community, plus begin to gather resources needed.
- Discuss appropriate storage needed for the area to enable safe and secure coverage of the resources.

Appendix

Action Plan for St Michael and All Angels Infant School

						<u>Key</u>
						  
	Area	Requirements	By whom	Success Criteria	Costings	Priority
Location 1	Environmental Learning Area	Area to be a whole school community project with all pupils helping to create. Area needs to be cleared of all existing vegetation and existing planting beds as planting taking place in Area 3, the Allotment space. Area to include appropriate storage, including resources eg - waterspray for looking at cobwebs. Zoned areas to be marked out with areas eg - Investigative Area and Log piles to be placed accordingly.	Mary to lead with additional help from Vicki and Graham and pupils.	Area to be used by all 3 schools within the Federation to develop Environmental Learning topics further.	TBC	
		<u>Celtic Roundhouse</u> - MF to visit other roundhouses (discuss further with HCC Landscape Architect for recommendations) to learn more about what/who can help to create. Eg - South Baddesley Infant School, Lymington	Mary	To create a well resourced gathering space to enhance outdoor learning activities.	TBC	
Location 2	Amphitheatre Space	Creation of a central meeting space both for school use by all 3 schools within the Federation, as well as the wider community for events such as Outdoor Worship by the church, plus performances by the local theatre group.	Matt	To create an all year round, all weather space that can be used by many for a wide variety of activity.	TBC	
Location 3	Allotment Area	Additional planting bed to be built and additional diocese funded orchard planting to be included. Ongoing planting going on in classrooms and at home to supplement the growing here eg - tomato plants.	Mary Flynn / Leon	To provide a dedicated space in the right area to enable year round growing, nurturing and maintenance to be enjoyed by all pupils and staff.	Ongoing funding	
Location 4	Natural Play Area	Visit Appleshaw Primary School to look at what was created there to help pull together a design brief for what is required for a KS1 focused area. Approach Scandor Landscape Contractors for a quotation.	Mary, Georgie and Tim	Creation of an alternative play space that supports physical play and gross motor skill development for all pupils within the school.	TBC	
		Explore options available of local groups that could help with clearance of the vegetation currently within the space.	Jo			

Location 5	Arboretum	Area of new tree planting to supplement the natural environment within the school environment, within the wider context of Lyndhurst, and to endeavour to try to make the school and all schools within the Federation carbon neutral.	Sourcing trees = Jo. Development of Yr 1 curriculum to include use of this area = Jan. QR code signage throughout = Tracy.	Area to be used throughout the year by all 3 schools.	TBC	
		Inclusion of information regarding trees on QR codes placed within the woodland to add to learning opportunities.			TBC	
Location 6	Designated Ball Play Area	Explore the cost of having one area of the hard playground space re-surfaced, fenced along one side and marked out as a suitable space for KS1 appropriate ball sport activity.	Mary/Matt	Area to be well managed and supervised as an area of ball play that removes conflict from the playground between groups. Improvement seen with pupils gross motor skill development.	TBC	
Location 7	Loose Material Play Area	Start to collect suitable resources for use within the area in line with the Grounds for Learning document shared with Matt and Mary. Letters to parents and local companies explaining what you are collecting and why to go out.		Children happily engaged in creative team building activities where communication skills can also be seen to be improving through observation of teaching staff.	TBC	
		Storage unit for resources to be sourced and put up to house everything in prior to bad weather.			TBC	
Location 8	Outdoor Library	Discuss area further with PTFA to help fund the area that is to support parental reading with children throughout the year both before and after school.	Matt/Mary/PTFA Chair	Area supporting reading within school for all ages	TBC	
Location 9	The "Chill Out" Zone	Discuss use of the area further with all teaching and lunchtime supervisory staff to ensure all understand the relevance of the area to be supervised as a place of calm activity for children who need time away from the playground.	Julia	Health and Well-being of all pupils seen to be improving for those who need a quieter place to play.	TBC	
		Discuss area further with PTFA to provide suitable storage and seating/tables for the area.	Mary		TBC	

Location 10	Climbing Wall	Additional fittings to be added to existing wall to further develop the variety of play available at break and lunchtimes.	Matt	Physical development improvements seen in children between Year R and Year 2.	TBC	
Location 11	Year 1 designated area	<p>Detailed zoning of the area to be completed with Year 1 teaching staff regarding what is needed to enhance and embed outdoor learning in teaching the Year 1 curriculum, and appropriate storage of resources to ensure areas of child initiated independent access is possible and is clearly zoned to teach responsibility towards the items.</p> <p>Inclusion of shade and shelter within the space to enable the area to be used throughout the year and in all weathers. Discuss area further with HCC Property Management Surveyor if structures are to be included to ensure all H&S aspects of proximity to the building are taken into account.</p>	<p>Matt/Mary/Year 1 staff</p> <p>Matt/Mary</p>	<p>Year 1 curriculum observations of pupils improvement due to outside area supporting learning following on from Year R assessment. Area to particularly support those in the transition from EYFS.</p>	TBC	
<u>NOTE</u>	All Weather Trail	Appropriately surfaced loop to enable access to all areas within the grounds throughout the year and in all weathers. Discuss further with governors and Property management surveyor to discuss potential surfacing (can change to be in context with the immediate surroundings) and costings.	Matt/Mary	All of the school grounds being used throughout the year by all within the school both for play and for learning.	TBC	