



Hiltingbury Junior School

School Grounds NOW & FUTURE

Report from the Landscape Strategy Workshops
January and February 2024



Completed June 2024

Introduction

Two workshops were planned to support development of a Landscape Strategy for the school grounds at Hiltingbury Junior School. This Strategy will help 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 3rd January and 19th February 2024. 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?”

All pupils within the school, all teaching support staff and a number of parents attended Workshop 1 with all teaching staff attending the second session after school.

- 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?”

All of the school also attended Workshop 2 and this 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
- Future Spaces pg 7 and 8
- Where do we want to be—Future Spaces pg 9
- Emerging Strategy Plan pg 10

Where are we NOW?

Rate the Space—

All pupils and staff looked at images of the school grounds (as illustrated below and on the next page) in advance of the workshop. Feedback was then given at the event to discuss all aspects of the grounds as they currently are. And the positive and negative aspects of them. The information below is a culmination of all that was discussed by everyone at the workshop.



Location 1

Location 1 is known as The Sensory Garden or Wellbeing Hub. It is a space used for “feeling calm and relieving stress, a place to go when you feel sad or lonely, a place to talk with friends and sit in the shade, and a place to improve your mental health. It is described as feeling “fun, safe, peaceful, calm, welcoming, cosy, quiet and relaxing”. Quality of the space was rated as 7/10 as although well loved by many it was thought that some parts of fence are broken and that although lovely for shade in the winter months the leaves make the tables beneath wet and slippery beneath to sit around and work at. Use scored 5/10 as some children recognised it is used a lot by the ELSA to work with children and there are always fun activities going on there with her. Other children said they never go there as don’t feel they need to.



Location 2

Location 2 is called the Small Playground or the Table Tennis area. It is used to play this designated game or for free running around in the space. It is described as “active and exciting, empty, challenging, fun and happy”.... It is described as feeling “like a good space as everyone there is having fun”. Quality is rated as 7/10 as its considered a very hard wearing and resilient space, and Use was rated as 6/10 due to



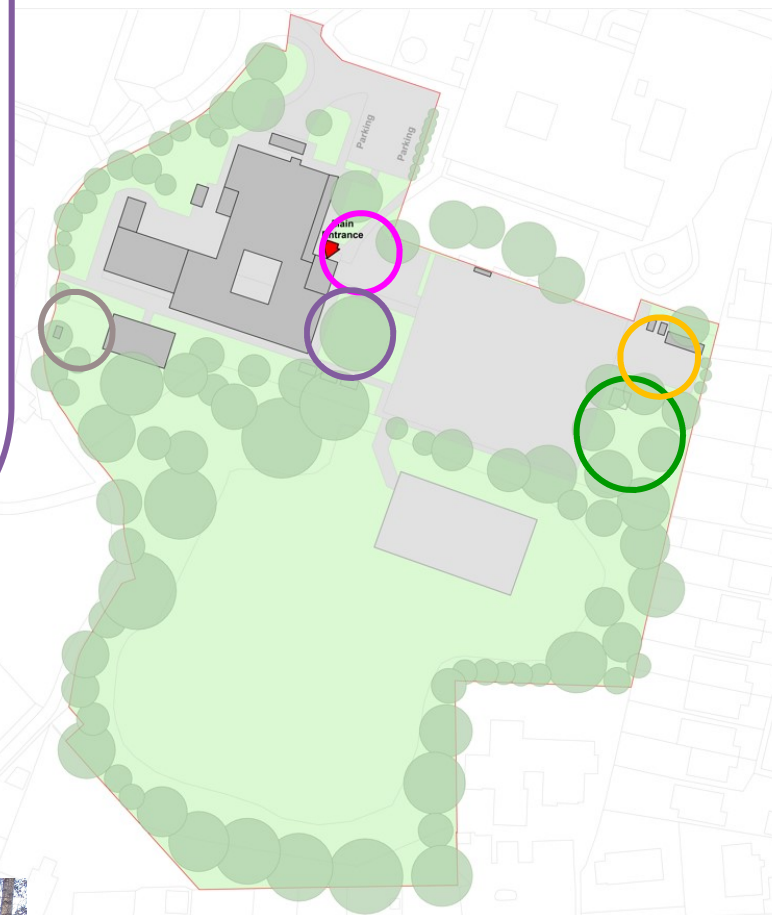
Location 5

Location 5 is the Gardening Area adjacent to the outside classroom that is used for teaching and music lessons. Many thought the area felt unused, unloved and unavailable and others commented that the peaceful and calming aspect of it it slightly overwhelmed by the music practice. Its an area that scored 6/10 for Quality and 2/10 for Use.



Location 3

Location 3 is known as The Adventure Playground and is used for free play featuring swinging and climbing. It is a popular area with pupils who described it as “FUN, energetic, adventurous and exciting”. Quality of the area was graded as 6/10 as although it is enjoyable some children feel it is a bit worn, that because everyone wants to play on it it feels over-used, and also it is an area under and around which gathers litter making it feel uncared for. It’s a popular area so scored 7/10, but the reason it didn’t score higher as it is sadly a season space. The area once wet can’t be used and becomes out of bounds.



Location 4

Location 4 is the Pond Area and is a space used for pond dipping and some aspects of outdoor learning. It was discussed that not many of the pupils have been into the area very much in their 4 years at the school, and it’s a locked, overgrown and underused space. As such Use scored as 0/10. It is an area that also scored low for quality due to its lack of management and scored 1/10. It is an area described as feeling “cramped, calm, natural, relaxing and green”.

Where are we NOW?...Cont'd



Location 6

Location 6 is known as the Astro. It is a fenced off area in which a wide range of active play takes place including PE, foam football, running around, "cops and robbers" and lots of other types of games. It is described as feeling FUN, but also hot, crowded, rough, exciting but also strict because of the rota. It's recognised as a hard wearing space and so was rated 9/10 for quality, but 10/10 for use as although used all year round.

Location 8 is The Playground that is used for sport and free play. It is an active, busy space that is used all year round by all ages and for a wide variety of reasons. Descriptions of the space are "wide, open, spacious, fun, big but sometimes crowded". It scored 10/10 as it is used every day and all year round and alongside that scored 10/10 for quality as looked after as a really important space.

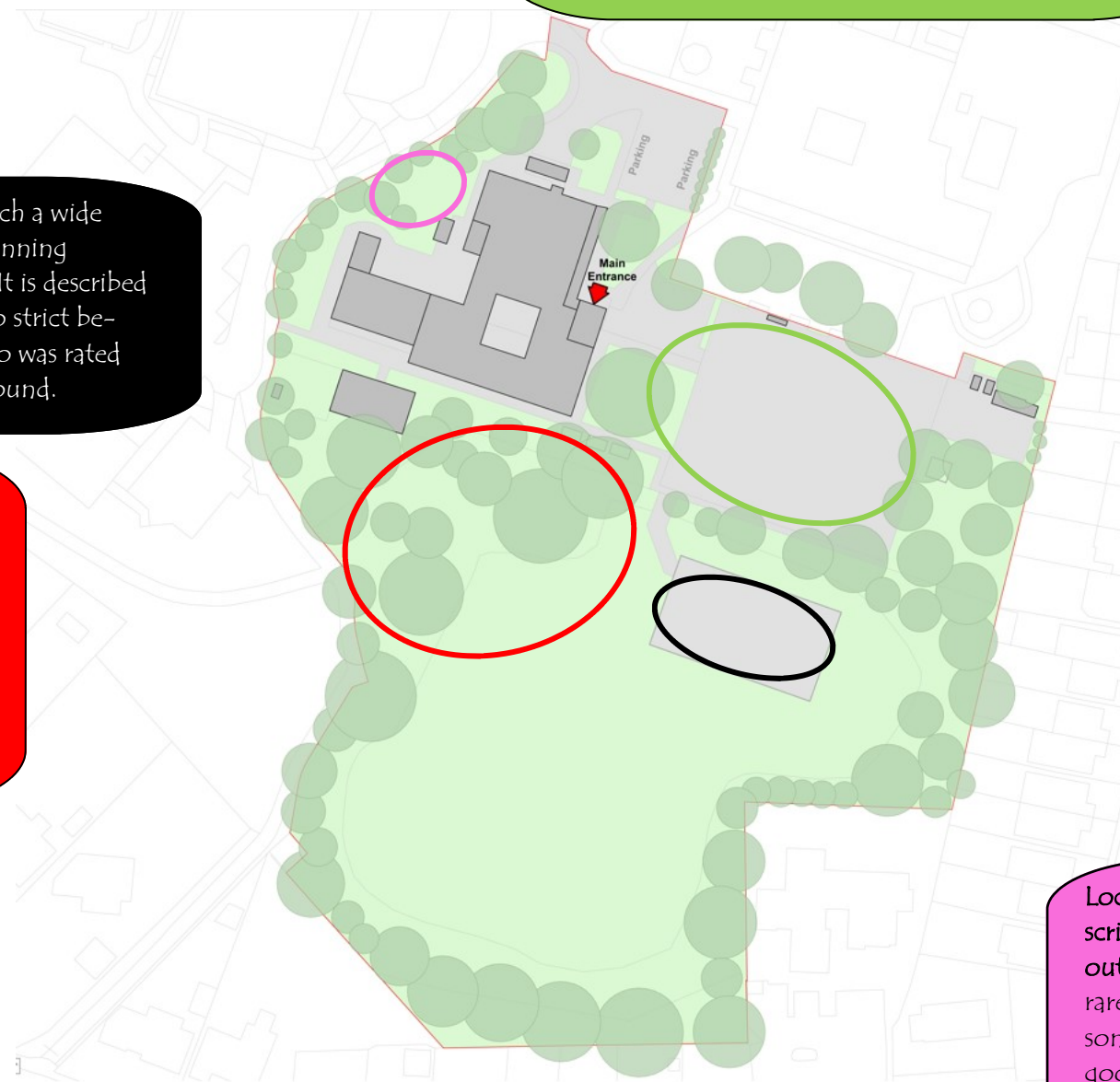


Location 8

Location 7 is the Woodland Area that is happily used for free games such as Manhunt, Hide and Seek and general running around in the shade. The children love being able to use this space in the summer months as often out of bounds in wetter weather due to the mud it creates back in school, and refer to it as a calm and happy place. "Cool, shady, relaxing and joyful...". Use of the area was marked as 6/10 as used as often as possible, and quality as 9/10 as it was described as "a well respected and maintained space that is important to all".



Location 7



Location 9

Location 9 is a space many different know exists. It was described as being an Outdoor Classroom or Amphitheatre where outdoor learning could take place. We learnt however that it rarely does though as too small for a whole class to sit, no reasons for being there, and the benches are rotting or wet and so good to sit on. Quality scored low with only 4/10 and use even lower as 1/10.



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

- General movement around the school throughout the day is considered to be good, and there are enough access points into the grounds to accommodate for all parents arriving at the school to deliver and pick up children at the beginning and end of the day.
- One problem was thought that the funneling of children in after break and lunch was slightly hectic and makes some late for class due to the numbers of children moving.
- Arrival at the new front entrance could be improved as the grassy areas lack management and it would be good to celebrate the school with all who arrive at Reception on the outside as well as once they have arrived inside the building.

Play, Breaktimes and Socialising

- Play and breaktimes at HJS are happy and fun places to be throughout the school year. The favourite places are the Astro and the Well being Hub for both active and quieter play and the children love the shade of the big tree to sit beneath in all weathers.
- A wide variety of activity is made available to the pupils at break and lunchtimes although it was thought a shame that additional spaces aren't currently available to them to expand play away from the hard surfaces and the softer and more natural areas made available.
- More creative play would be welcomed such as den building or construction to provide another variety of play to what is currently available and for communication skills to develop further too.

Health and Well Being

- Outside spaces at Hiltingbury Junior School are well used to promote physical fitness and activity. There is a wide variety of sport that takes place throughout the year for all ages at the school and everyone recognizes the benefits of the large open spaces of the playground and the Astro.
- Areas for quieter spaces to cater for emotional well being are harder to find as spaces to sit with friends and talk are few and far between and found more in areas that aren't able to be used outside of supervised curriculum time.
- Safety in certain areas is a concern as there are parts of the site that are harder to supervise, some fences could be higher and parts of pathway that could have better surfacing.

Outdoor Teaching and Learning

- Using the grounds currently is seasonal and dependent on the weather. Use of the outside space is currently considered problematic in times of both rain, and also of heat as there is little shelter or shade from either. The field area is considered too muddy to use in the winter months and the pond area sadly isn't used often due to the area being in need of management and maintenance and currently being too overgrown to take class safely into.
- However, many lessons do take place outside the classroom including PE, RE, ELSA lessons with small numbers of children, Hugo the school dog plays a huge part in daily life at the school, and the playground area is sometimes used for science, maths and art lessons.
- At the moment it was discussed that lessons outside are sporadic and not always integrated into lesson planning. More of this is what the school would like for the future and for resources needed to have appropriate storage outside.

The Natural Environment

- Many at the workshop thought that although nature surrounds them at the school it is rarely seen or highlighted in the learning. And, that currently opportunities to make the most of it through the use of technology or training eg—wildlife cameras etc. aren't made the most of.
- The large amount of trees are recognized in showing changing of the seasons and a variety of colour, and the pond area although rarely used is recognized for being a home to newts, toads and frogs.
- It is recognised that the grounds also house squirrels, hedgehogs, foxes and a wide variety of birds. Bird and Bat boxes can still be seen in the grounds from historic activities however are not used/watched now.
- It is hoped that the newly trained Forest School leader will enable the children to use and explore the Natural Environment here at school more for the future.

Context and Community

- Currently the grounds are only used by the school and its PTA for school events. There are lots of events where parents are invited and community activities such as Fireworks Night, Christmas Carols, Remembrance Day, the Summer Fayre and also whole school picnics with parents.
- The HSPTA run events such as the Color Run and Community Days through the school year to help fundraise for the school and these often use the outside spaces to support the fun activities.
- The grounds are often used by the adjacent Infant School for events such as Sports Day and also for some of their lessons, and both schools join together for events such as litter picking.
- Currently the grounds aren't used by outside users however this is something the school are keen to explore for the future.

Where do we want to be?....



Property Services

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

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

Responses from pupils in Years 4 and 6

- We can run freely, play different sports and games, and can investigate the wild-life.
- We can have fun with our friends and relax.
- We can play and have fun, can learn about nature and can play more sports!
- A place to;; make friends, have fun, eco-friendly, somewhere to work, enjoy ourselves, look after plants, calm down and feel safe.
- A place for different sports and activities,.... Not just football and as a place of downtime from lessons.
- Where children can have fun inside and outside with cover and safe equipment.
- Where we can play football and basketball every single day!
- Everyone can have fun with spaces for gymnastics, and a happy environment.
- Be safe, make friends and use as a learning environment.
- A space where everyone is kind to each other.
- Where people can find space to be calm.
- Where we can have an Outside Mystery Area.
- A place where we find love and friendship.
- A happy place and BAKING area.
- Outside spaces that are available ALL YEAR ROUND.
- Happy, Peaceful, Calm

Responses from teaching and support staff....

- A place where children can let off steam, relax and socialise between lessons. Where lessons can be enhanced and children can gain an appreciation for the natural world.
- Where wildlife thrives, and children can learn, play and explore.
- Accessible, inviting, and supports learning. A place to explore and take risks!
- Safe to use, provides creative explorative and enjoyable opportunities, and where children and staff can use ALL areas of the grounds.
- Where children and adults can make a connection to nature, be nurtured, be calm, be fun, be safe and allow everyone to connect, be healthy and to grow.
- A place that is safe, fun, engaging and purposeful for school staff, children and the wider community.
- Where the whole community can thrive, enjoy and explore.
- A place that is integrated into our curriculum, provides a variety of stimulating experiences for our children and where all staff and children feel safe, calm and fulfilled.
- A place where all have an area that safe and offers enjoyment.
- Children can learn, explore and thrive.
- A place where children can explore, be creative, curious and enjoy the outdoor environment for social and learning opportunities.
- Where can staff can enjoy outdoor space during breaktimes and all children have a place they enjoy and can thrive
- A place that creates better learning experiences and preparation for life.

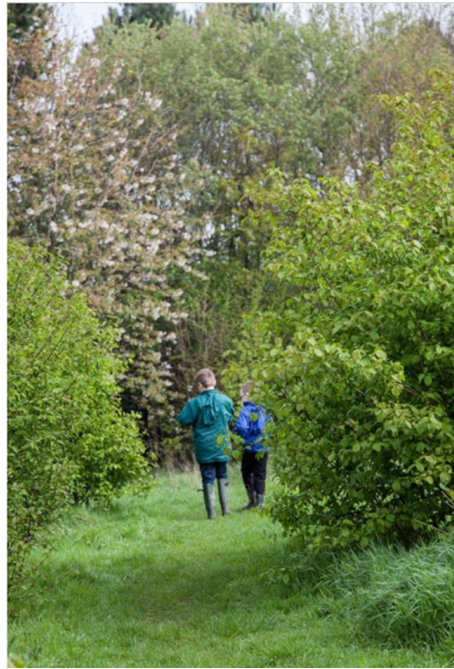
Responses from pupils in Years 3 and 5

- A place we can relax, have fun, where everyone is kind and happy, and there are activities for everyone to do.
- We can use the outside space more as part of our lessons.
- Everyone here feels free, safe and active.
- Can play more, less restrictions on use of the grounds when, and can use the pond more.
- A place for freedom and friends.
- Fresh, exciting and we can use it regularly.
- A place where learning can happen anywhere
- A peaceful environment where we can have more fun learning outside.
- A place where you can write stories outside.
- A place wildflowers can grow.

Where do we want to be?...

Future spaces

Participants selected images to describe the kind of spaces they would like to see in the future school grounds. They discussed these in groups and then presented their thoughts on positive and negative aspects of the selected images. The choice of images and discussion is summarised here.



Spaces chosen by pupils in Year groups 4 and 6....

Where do we want to be?...

Future spaces

Participants selected images to describe the kind of spaces they would like to see in the future school grounds. They discussed these in groups and then presented their thoughts on positive and negative aspects of the selected images. The choice of images and discussion is summarised here .

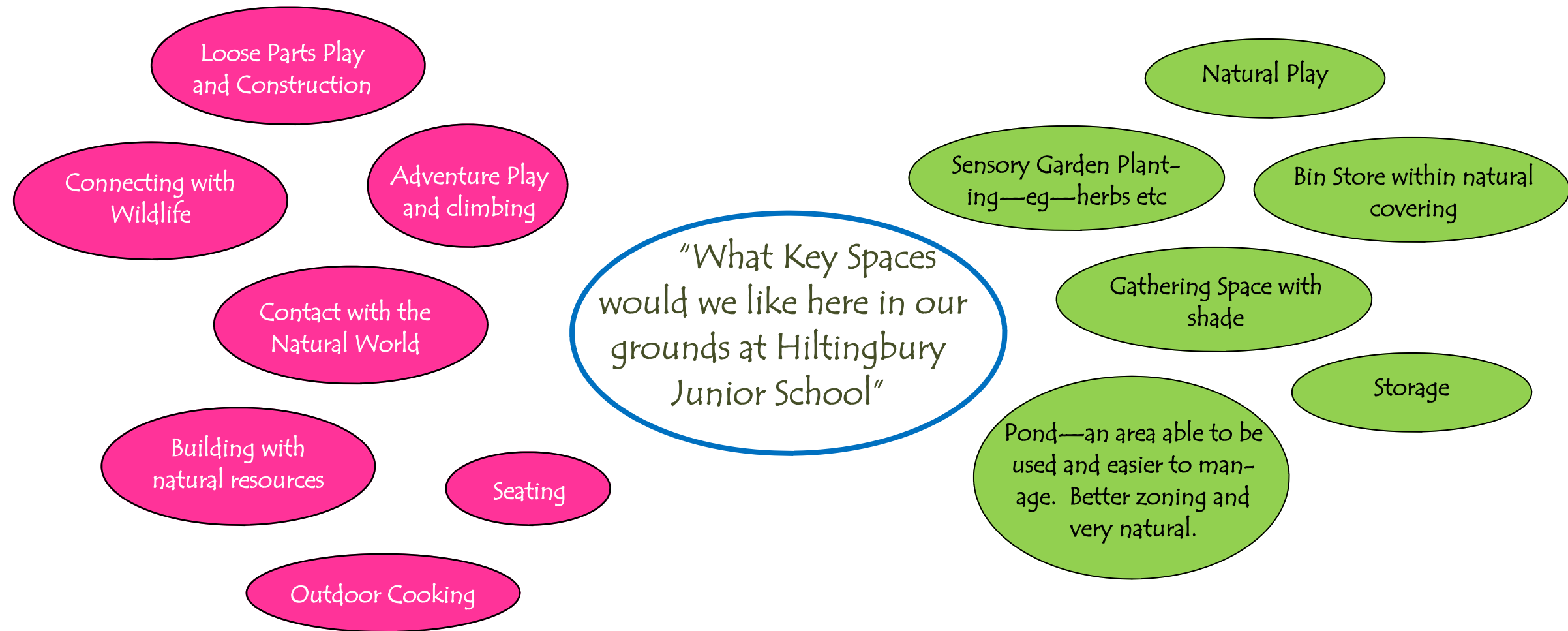


Spaces chosen by pupils in Year groups 3 and 5....

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.....



Spaces chosen by pupils.....

Spaces chosen by Teaching staff.....

Hiltingbury Junior School

Emerging Strategy Plan

Completed — June 2024

Describing our ambition for the grounds

Area 1: Pond Area

Ambition: To develop the area so that all pupils can use the area for all aspects of learning through the year.

Ideas and Requirements:

- Clearance and redevelopment of the area to be discussed further with the Hampshire Wildlife Trust to enable the area to become a wildlife haven, and be managed and maintained to retain this.
- Discuss use of the Pond Area further with all teaching staff to reinvigorate ideas around the space, and develop lesson planning to use it for outdoor learning across all aspects of the curriculum.
- Additional seating to be included for use in all weathers, and also a small area of **Natural Play** to enable the area to be used for active play as well as in curriculum time.
(See Area 7 for additional information on this area)
- Inclusion of a new lockable gate to enable staff to provide access at agreed times of the day for pupils to be used under supervision.

Area 2: Woodland Walk / Low Rope Course

Ambition: To create an area where children can explore freely, and enjoy spending time walking and talking with friends in a natural environment.

Ideas and Requirements

- Clearance of the area of all low lying branches and groundcover to enable free access to the area beneath the canopy of the trees.
- Check all boundary fences along the route to enable use of this part of the site without concerns about fence heights and security. Make good any gaps or areas of concern before allowing access.
- Alongside the all weather pathway include areas of low rope climbing stations within the trees that encourage the children to further develop their core strength and gross motor skills. Explore ideas around suitable stations of activity and acceptable heights by discussion with HCC Property Management Surveyor and approved contractors.

Areas 3a and 3b: Loose Parts Play

Ambition: To develop an area where children can develop their creativity and communication skills.

Ideas and Requirements:

- Share the Play Scotland document with all teaching and supervisory staff to further explore the ideas and resources needed to facilitate this at break and lunchtimes throughout the year.
- Share the idea with the wider school community to gather appropriate materials and include appropriate storage for weekend storage of the items.

Notes

- Seating throughout the grounds to enable friends and colleagues to sit and talk together throughout the year. Differing design and materials, but useable through the year and in all weathers.

Area 4: Well-being Hub

Ambition: Beneath the shade of the tree create an area for pupils who need an alternative and more peaceful play experience for break and lunchtimes. Also an area that can be used by small groups or for interventions with pupils outside of the classroom and in the natural space of the tree.

Ideas and Requirements

- Tables and chairs to be included that enables children to enjoy sitting and doing art work outside. Additional storage for resources to be included to ensure use of the area for this can be spontaneous and be ready with all resources on hand.
- Tables can also be used for eating picnic lunches outside and cushions to be included to ensure the space is comfortable and welcoming.
- Chalk boards to be mounted on vertical surfaces to encourage mark making and writing outside of classroom time and sensory herb planting to be included in pots to endeavour to create a calm and peaceful space that both pupils and teaching staff love to be within.

Key Principles

- To enable all children to make a connection with the natural world, and a respect for it.
- Encourage school community values
- Link with our Forest School values, sustainability and climate change, and our responsibility to the environment.
- Develop an ability to take risks through play to build choice, resilience and independence.
- To develop all parts of the child through play and learning outside.
- Enjoy our outside space for learning and play throughout the year.

★ Area 6: Sheltered Outside Space

Ambition: In combination with the adjacent hall, creation of a Multi Use area that supports After School Club activities, small group use during the day, and a space that teaching and support staff can use for quiet time away from the building.

Ideas and Requirements

Additional existing seating area to be linked and used in combination with a redesign of the surfacing and seating within the space to make it more useable, and more visible to all. All weather surfacing to ensure the areas can be used throughout the year, and explore ideas around appropriate shade that can be used within the courtyard space. To provide shade for the hot summer months and shelter throughout.

Area 7: Natural Play Area

Ambition: Explore and include an area of natural play for pupils to climb and balance on within the existing woodland space.

Ideas and Requirements

- Visit other HCC schools to see similar areas in practice and talk to contractors about potential designs for a KS2 focused area.
- Share ideas with all teaching and support staff to enable them to have an input into the design and future management of the space, and to discuss parameters around supervision of this future area of play.
- Inclusion of an additional area within Area 1—The Pond Area as mentioned before to enable this Natural Play to also take place there.

Area 8: Welcome to Hiltingbury

Ambition: Creation of an area to welcome all arriving at the school and to celebrate what goes within the school throughout the year.

Ideas and Requirements

- Discuss design of the area further with teaching staff and governors but to include removal of the existing fencing and grass area, but retain access for emergency vehicles.
- Inclusion of an area for changeable sculpture changed yearly working with a local artist.

Area 9: Seating Area

Ambition: Extension of the adjacent KS1 outside area within the Infant School to provide a calm seating area for pupils to enjoy talking with friends throughout the year.

Ideas and Requirements

- Area to include revised surfacing, benches, planting and seating to create a calming spectator space for the playground. *"A nice place to be"*.



Area 5: Games Space

Ambition: A area dedicated to the storage and playing of games in pairs and small groups across the year groups and throughout the year.

Ideas and Requirements

- Space, appropriate surfacing, resources and storage for games such as Table Tennis, and Jenga etc.
- Discuss the area further with teaching and support staff to create a bank of appropriate games and resources for the area. Area to be self managed by pupils and with Play Leaders take responsibility.