Millbrook Primary School

Links with the community to develop the Outdoor environment
Millbrook school wanted to develop part of their outdoor environment to make a sensory garden.

You can find out here how they worked together with parents, local businesses and environmental experts to produce a wonderful resource for the whole school.

We particularly like the idea of inviting parents for a cream tea as a thank you, especially as it used produce from their garden.
What the school says

A large outdoor area is being developed to be used by the whole school for cross curricular purposes.

This may interest other schools in a similar position who may be looking for inspiration/ideas of how or where to start a similar project.

This kind of project can help to encourage community cohesion and establish partnerships within it.
How the Grounds were being used - mainly by the playgroup and reception children to explore the environment, plant seeds, nurture and grow crops.
We’re Going On A Bear Hunt!

Children from the SEN Unit using the outdoor area.

Inspired by the story ‘We’re Going On A Bear Hunt’ the children used all their senses to explore the outdoor area.
Our plan

We sought advice from a local landscape gardener, who produced a draft plan.

A Park Ranger, who was also a parent, expressed an interest in helping to develop a wild meadow.

We also wanted to separate the raised bed area from the rest of the garden creating a working garden environment.

The children had also raised over £2,000 toward an activity trail.
Work begins!! Staff parents, and children worked together.

All of the achievements have received tremendous response from the children, staff and parents. The outdoor area is being used across the whole school for science, literacy, maths, art and social and emotional development of the children.
Our Bug Hotel

Who do you hope/expect will stay at your hotel?

Has anyone been spotted yet?
Sponsorship was received through the local Forest Rangers to plant eight fruit trees.

A Willow Dome was constructed with the work force supplied by the charity ‘Inner Flame’ who are sponsored by the ‘Prince’s Trust’.

A Story Telling chair has been bought and placed there by the school as a memorial to a pupil who sadly died from a tumour.

The dome and niche provide a seating area for the children.
Recently we have built a greenhouse out of recycle 2 litre coke bottles which the children collected.

We have made our own compost from recycled wood pallets

The Gardening Club invited parents along for a Cream Tea. They used the produce from the garden.

Next steps are to lay a central patio area and to further develop sections of the garden with plants and artefacts to stimulate every child's curiosity and to create an outdoor classroom where not only science but all curriculum learning can take place.
The impact for our school was ...

... Fantastic! Staff, pupils and parents are proud of everything that has been achieved so far. The area is used more frequently especially by the older children who now have recently used the area as a super starter for their topic ...

We were able to use the outdoor area for our role play focus on pirates in ks2. The willow structure was the pirates den and the trim trail was the plank! The many trees meant branches could be used as swords also! It added a realistic dimension to the role play. (Y3/4 teacher)
Gardening Club

The raised beds have produced a vast range of produce such as lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, spring onions, beetroot, peas, potatoes, cabbages and pumpkins, some of which has been used by the school kitchen or taken home by the “Garden Club” children.
Children feel free to be themselves outside of the constraints of the classroom. Those who struggle to concentrate indoors often blossom outside, where their kinaesthetic learning needs can be addressed more fully.

Fresh air and open space obviously promote physical activity but the impact of green spaces on mental health is just as important.

Regular direct contact with the natural world builds deep connections that last a lifetime. How can we expect people to care about something they don't know or have never experienced?
What we will do next

The project has come a long way in a year but we still want to do more.

We will continue to develop the garden creating and adding other features that staff, pupils and parents can share such as planting Spring bulbs.

We also plan to establish partnerships with the local community such as church groups, residential homes, local playgroups and the Turkish community.

We hope to make links with other schools, building partnerships and sharing resources.