

Bird-Friendly Nursery Garden Project

Dalbeattie Nursery Class
2011/2012 and 2012/2013



(Children enjoying looking for birds from our new “bird watching cabin.”)

Context for the Project

“Outdoor learning experiences are often remembered for a lifetime. Integrating learning and outdoor experiences, whether through play in the immediate grounds or adventures further afield, provides relevance and depth to the curriculum in ways that are difficult to achieve indoors.”

Learning and Teaching Scotland (2010) *Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning*, Glasgow: Learning and Teaching Scotland, p5

“Outdoor active play is crucial for good physical and mental health and helps build an appreciation of the environment. The value of play for children’s early brain development and in developing language and literacy cannot be underestimated.”

Blair, M. (2012) “Go Play Outcome and Evaluation Framework” (Autumn 2012) *Early Years Matters*, Education Scotland, p30

Aims

***Our aim is to enhance our outdoor learning area, thereby creating better opportunities for children to develop many cross curricular skills and skills for life.**

The intention is to enhance the area in keeping with a bird conservation project. The Nursery garden will be improved to incorporate a bird hide and resources for bird watching. The nature of the project will also fit within the whole school approach to Eco Schools and therefore promote the 3-18 curriculum.

Rationale

We identified the need to enhance the outdoor area following self evaluation by Nursery staff of the outdoor learning opportunities/provision available. Following a recent visit by the Care Inspectorate, it was suggested that free flow play between indoor and outdoor areas could be improved greatly by better provision of suitable outdoor clothing so that learning experiences can be more effective outdoors, than is currently the case. After consultation of the school’s eco action plan which aimed for better monitoring of wildlife and better biodiversity within the school grounds, it was decided that a nature area could be an effective focus. It therefore seemed a fitting place to start an attitude of caring for the environment at the early stage of three or four years old when children start Nursery. This is in keeping with national research and documentation (e.g. *Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Play*, 2010) which emphasises the importance of meaningful learning experiences outdoors in delivering better outcomes for children and developing lifelong skills and attitudes.



(Children using bird puppets in the bird area as part of an RSPB led session in the Nursery garden)

Parental Involvement

Survey of Parents: What outdoor experiences would you like your child to have at Nursery?

“Playing with others, wee bit of rain can be fun”

“To learn about nature through outdoor play and playing safely. Also to learn to play in a team and share outdoor toys.”

“Lots of gardening, bug hunts, bug traps, nature walks...”

“Experiences which help them to learn new things and which give them physical exercise at the same time”



Child playing and exploring in a willow tunnel made with willow that was brought in by a parent.

“Children should enjoy all kinds of weather, it brings new experiences and lots of fun.”

“living willow tunnel, outdoor classroom”

“Caring for the environment, gardening, recycling materials through den building/ nest boxes/bug hotels, feeding the birds/ bird watching”

“Let them jump in puddles, get wet, get muddy, dig for worms...”

Child Involved Planning

“telescopes”

“Plant some seeds and the birds would eat them up”

“A seat with a window to watch the birds and a chair”

“Get loads of food for them and worms.”

“What if we have a big screen with lots of chairs so we watch the birds on the tv”

“plant flowers for the birds to look at”

“Be quiet so we can watch them (birds).”

“plant flowers for the birds to look at”

“If they are up in the air, we get goggles to see them further.”



Children using the new bird hide area.

Project Funding:

The project was granted £4,306.04 in funding from Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Item Purchased	Reason for Purchase
Jungle Cabin	Open ended resource to be used as a bird hide, area to view the nature area and for role play purposes
Shed	Storage area for bird watching items, etc
Building work to install jungle cabin and shed	To safely install the shed and cabin
Tuff cam cameras and carry bag	Open ended resource to develop ICT and observational skills in the outdoor environment
Feeding Area	To attract birds to the garden for project
Sonic explorer	To develop awareness of sounds in the environment
Motion activated bird cam	To capture images of birds using the garden which can then be used to develop ICT and learning across the curriculum
Binoculars	To encourage children to look for birds in the Nursery garden and to develop learning
Double welly rack	Storage for outdoor learning resources
Mobile Cloakrooms	Storage for outdoor learning resources
Kingston Memory Stick	Storage of images, resources, etc for outdoor area project
Laminating Pouches	To make bird and nature related resources for use in outdoor environment
Outdoor Suits	Enough suits purchased to enable all children to use a suit at Nursery in a session.

