

Bruntsfield Primary School Playground Improvement Project

Aim

This project aims to raise funds and awareness in order to make improvements to the school's playground, both in the upper and lower areas, to increase learning and wellbeing opportunities for children. Led by the school's senior management team, with assistance from parents, children's voices are at the heart of planning to ensure that improvements reflect children's needs.

There is no designated outdoor learning staff on the school team, but the dedication of teachers and parents has kickstarted a project that aims to maximise the school's limited outdoor space in multi-functional ways, for the longer term and benefit of present and future pupils.

Below is a timeline of the project so far.

Contact

The Playground Working Group meet regularly with school staff to progress the work of the project. Email bruntsfieldplayground@gmail.com if you'd like to get involved, have ideas or funding sources you would like to share.



Spring planters 2025

From Stephen Gilhooley, Headteacher:

Bruntsfield have had Sustainability and in particular Outdoor Learning at the heart of our Improvement Plan for session 2024-2025. The School receives half a day a week funding from City of Edinburgh Council solely to promote Sustainability in the Curriculum. This year, two of our teaching staff, Mrs Bowes and Mrs McLachlan have been planning and designing a new outdoor learning skills progression framework and launched it with staff at our January In-Service.

Other tasks include the development and allocation of resources and ensuring every staff member has experience of loose parts training.

Our planters look great around the playground. One of our community partners, Brodies Solicitors have been taking groups of children out for gardening and our parent team maintain the planters during the holidays.

We have an excellent parent working party who are actively involved in the development of playground improvements and work with staff to access money from our Parent Council for new equipment, as well as and to fund plans to change the aesthetic of the school grounds and environment.

Donate to improve Bruntsfield Primary School's playground!



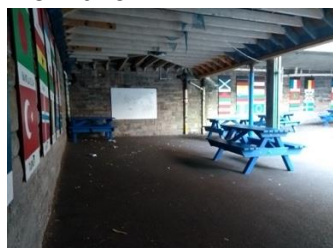
Current developments

Master Plan:

In order to establish a more strategic plan for the playground, and to effectively communicate that plan to potential funders, we have commissioned a costed masterplan. This masterplan will respond to the pupil and staff engagement previously undertaken and will help steer future playground development. It will be developed by a professional landscape architecture practice, appointed following a competitive tender process. This will include improved storage, bin screening and an outdoor classroom as well as newly painted areas.

An example of potential painted colour lay out based on consultation with children

From this.....



To this....



Planting:

Since the installation and filling of more than 20 planters in the playground over the past two years we have been experimenting with a range of ornamental and edible plants and approaches to engaging the children in the development of the planters. Parent volunteers and staff have been working with small groups of children to plant seeds and to care for the plants. We have an ever evolving planting plan that is based around links to the outdoor learning and curriculum topics for each year group, such as beans for 'jack and the beanstalk' for P1, tatties and wheat for 'harvest' in P3 and beetroot for 'natural dyes' in P6. We are allowing for a good deal of trial and error as we navigate the availabilities of parent helpers, the whims of the Edinburgh climate and the high levels of enthusiasm of the children for leading on the planting.

More volunteers will always be needed to continue this endeavour to integrate nature into the school playground aesthetic, attract pollinating insects and other minibeasts to the grounds and provide learning opportunities and sensory experiences for the children.

Events

Raising awareness of what is possible outdoors

2025

Summer fayre: annual plants swap and sell, and nature craft using leaf dye



2024

- Funding application submitted to Parent Council and approved for: Master Plan for playground design , Bin Screening, Loose Parts, Planters, cabin, benches
- Council guidance: integration of updated guidance on safety in Playgrounds
- School Improvement Plan for 2024 to 25 identifies outdoor learning as a priority as part of sustainability planning
- Planting and edibles: planters expanding in playground and linkage with teaching



Winter fayre 2024

Bringing outdoors indoors when the winter weather is unkind, making garlands with natural materials

Summer fayre 2024

Annual plants exchange, herbal mocktails and loose parts showcase, a space for children to experiment with materials and self-directed activity and play



2023

- School improvement plan outlines outdoor development to increase range of outdoor learning opportunities
- Funding from PC : Planters development. Planters increased in various areas with pupils involvement in planting



- Funding application submitted to Learning Through Landscapes for school's grant (unsuccessful)
- Presentation to Parent Council 'Bruntsfield Landscape Framework draft' **JON**
- Parent Working Group expands to include landscape design with a view to Master plan
- Installation
- Events to promote seasonal connection and outdoor enjoyment :
Winter fayre – fire pit gathering, toasting marshmallows around the fire together



Summer fayre – annual plant swap, mandalas art, giant collaborative mandala decorate with natural materials and small mandalas



2022

- Consultation feedback collated in to Padlets and shared with school community. This forms the basis of planning going forward:

Consultation feedback Padlets:

Children's voice padlet (see below for summary of themes)

:<https://padlet.com/bruntsfieldplayground/tc12019tx31guj7s>

School community padlet (mixed adults/

children):<https://padlet.com/bruntsfieldplayground/iyq1slwmjunxqzfh>

Project planning padlet <https://padlet.com/bruntsfieldplayground/Bookmarks>

Key areas of improvement from children's feedback:

Greenery and flowers - grass, trees, plants and growing food, greenery at different heights with more living nature

Colourful and clean shelters, safe surfaces - downstairs space shelters and stones, shelters, drawings show a happy, colourful space

Shelters and cosy dens - comfortable, quiet places, sofas and reading corners, high up places away from the noisy, rough activity on the ground

Physical activity equipment - across upstairs and downstairs, at different heights for swinging, climbing, bouncing, sliding, balls

Arts and crafts - chalkboards, chalk, crafts, quiet drawing space

Social space - for eating lunch, board games, sharing interests

Resources for all - more loose parts, toys, animals, role play

Landscaping and routes - drawings show that location, structure, height and position of equipment, growing and dens is important

-Planters - first planters built and planted, planting map with light levels, children start to be involved in gardening opportunities in school learning

-Events: Winter fayre 'playground party', with planting and natural crafts by lantern light

Summer fayre: gardening with children, planting existing planters, consultation with children and families on playground improvement ideas



-Consultation with all stakeholders at events and in school: families, pupils, teachers, clubs and - Council, as well as external agencies

A group of parents came together to help the school kickstart a new phase of development for the playground, with expertise across gardening, landscape architecture, play, physical activity and sustainability