

Collaton St Mary C.E. (Aided) Primary School.

School Grounds' Policy

Aims

- To ensure the environment of the school is welcoming to parents, pupils and visitors.
- To promote the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of the pupils.
- To develop a positive attitude towards sustaining the quality of the environment.
- To develop environmental awareness, knowledge and understanding.
- To encourage pupils to learn directly, from their surroundings.

Objectives

- To use the school grounds as a resource to develop skills in each curriculum subject through practical activities/interaction.
- To encourage pupils to take responsibility for the environment.
- To enrich pupils' empathy for the environment.
- To develop, consolidate and apply geographical skills such as mapping skills.
- To develop and consolidate the recognition of patterns and processes.
- To develop and consolidate enquiry, investigation, problem solving and decision making.
- To develop and consolidate the communication of feelings and ideas/values, opinions.
- To develop and consolidate the skills of measuring and classifying.
- To support the development of literacy, numeracy and graphicacy skills.

Health & Safety

- Ensure the environment is safe and secure for all pupils.
- Check, repair or replace equipment as necessary.

Developing Our School Grounds Environment

Our approach to developing our school grounds environment has been a holistic one. As a school, we felt that the development of one area without consideration for the whole would detract from our philosophy. Therefore, we wanted a broad approach to the environment that provided contrasting areas for work, play and reflection. The needs of all members of our school community and sensitivity to the existing environment were considered.

The school gave the Key Stage 2 pupils the opportunity to draw plans showing their visions of what developments they would like to see in their school grounds environment. This has resulted in the forming of a School's Ground Committee. The committee members represent all facets of the school, ranging from Key Stage 1 Pupils through to members of the SLT.

Playground

It has been well documented that;

Time on the playground is often the least structured and least positive aspect of the school day, and

That children do not engage in purposeful play activities and consequently may be drawn into inappropriate patterns of behaviour.

The School's Council supports the concept of 'zoning', creating specific areas for activities. This alleviates the problems caused by sporting/running activities encroaching on quieter, less physical activities. Some of the Year 6 boys have volunteered to support younger children when it is their turn to play football. The council have reported that there is still a need to have quiet areas.

Our goal must be to have a playground which is a stimulating environment bursting with fun, purposeful activities that are supporting pupils to play co-operatively and enjoy a more active, healthier lifestyle.

Scientific Area.

We are aiming to develop a Nature/Sensory Trail. This would be located around stepping stones before entering the quiet area and extends the adjacent playground into an exciting environmental experience.

"An understanding of basic environmental concepts will give meaning and order to pupils of the world around them and enhance their concept of it."

Wildlife and the School Environment 1992.

Early Years Outdoor Play Area

Young children need to be able to move vigorously and freely - it is part of their natural development. They also need to be able to make choices, follow interests and exercise their growing independence.

We want to develop an outdoor environment where children can develop their physical and social skills. This will be a space where children can develop physically and emotionally in a safe and structured play environment.

Our Vision for An Early Years Outdoor Play Area includes clearly defined structured play areas:

- There should be a challenging area where children can ride, or push and pull, and play with wheeled toys. This area may include a zebra crossing to teach road safety initiatives.
- There should be a climbing area where children can develop physical skills.
- There should be several role-play areas offering children the opportunity to develop socially.
- There should be open spaces of flat grass for children to run and play games and a gentle hill for children to roll down.
- There should be a textured winding path leading to a Wishing Well or similar feature.
- There are garden areas where children can learn about plants, the changing seasons and the creatures that inhabit their environment.

"Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. In playing, they behave in different ways: sometimes their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play.

Through play in a secure environment with effective adult support, children can:

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world;*
- Practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills;*
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules;*
- Be alone, be alongside others or cooperate as they talk or rehearse their feelings;*
- Take risks and make mistakes;*
- Think creatively and imaginatively;*
- Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems;*
- Express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations."*

QCA (2000) Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage.

Quiet Area.

The school site being very new offers little in respect of mature trees and shade and so the children have no where to go during the hot summer months. The aim of this area is to provide a peaceful and relaxing environment enhanced by plants and water features to enable the children to sit and talk quietly with their friends. One of the key features the children want to incorporate is a friendship bench where children who are feeling lonely can sit and friends from their class will come and talk to them.

