

Project Playground

For those new parents who don't know, Project Playground began eighteen months ago with a mission to realise the potential of our school grounds and bring its use to match the high standards of our school vision. Project Playground wants the grounds of Betty Layward to become a centre of excellence for outdoor learning and play and has been supporting the school to do this in a holistic way that will enhance not just playtimes but the way the grounds are used to support the curriculum.

The PTFA gave £900 to pay for an audit, consultation and zone plan to identify best ways to improve the playground for its key stakeholders, using the expertise of an outdoor play consultant and landscape architect at Spaceout. [www. spaceout.org.uk](http://www.spaceout.org.uk) The PTFA also allocated £12,000 to fund a first build project coming out of the zone plan. £2654 has been spent on safety surface urgently needed by nursery to allow children to climb on their new climbing frame, also funded by the PTFA.

The consultant performed an audit of the grounds and play at Betty Layward, which confirmed our playground fell well short of fulfilling its potential to facilitate the different types of learning and play identified by experts as important to child development. She also spent time with the children asking them for their ideas on improving the playground. The playground is the School Council's most talked about subject, and last term its members visited a number of playgrounds, bringing back ideas to feed into our project.

The project had some delays last year due to changes in SLT and investigations into historic issues with neighbours and how that could impact on our playground improvements. These are now complete.

We're delighted that the arrival of Jessica as Headteacher brings the stability needed to instigate with gusto such a big project, one which will impact on both the culture and infrastructure of the school. Jessica is fully behind Project Playground and brings with her great experience of improving other school grounds.

Stephen Airey, teacher of Year 2 Peach, is now, with Jessica, leading the project from the school side. He has a strong interest in outdoor learning and play and as part of Project Playground will be trained in Forest School education, as well as developing an exciting outdoor project that will be revealed soon.

With Jessica and Steve at the helm the project will be going full steam ahead this year and we will communicate exciting developments with parents.

The Project Playground noticeboard will shortly be updated to show the audit and some comments from the children.