



# Echline Primary School Playground Development

# Assessing the Current Provision

**1.** Find out where the proposed school extension will be located. If possible, get a boundary for this in order to draw it on a plan so as to understand the area that we will not be developing for playground use. If the proposed access points into the new extension are known then this should be marked on a plan in order to see how the playground facilities will be integrated as well as understanding how the circulation routes will work.

**2.** What existing play features / structures / natural features (trees/bushes) we have that are used for play.

**3.** Understanding the current nature / pattern of play by the children:

- What the children like to play outside
- Favourite places to play
- Who does what where
- Avoided areas
- Why

**4.** What areas of the playground are not used / underutilised / could be used better.



Play Feature: The Amphitheatre



Play Feature: Slide



Play Feature: Trees located opposite nursery entrance



Play Feature: The Horseshoe



Underutilised area

**5.** Are there any obstacles that affect play in the playground (things that get in the way).

**6.** What existing loose parts for play we have in the school shed.

**7.** What opportunities existing topography / planting in school playground can provide, for example, the mound where the slide is can also incorporate a tunnel integrated into the mound.

**8.** What other school facilities there are such as the shed, Ross's Garden, rainbow benches, bicycle storage areas, bins.

**9.** Are there rundown playground elements such as the fences around the school edge and within the playground that could be improved / removed.

**10.** Check the school playground rules, policies and procedures document if available



Opportunity to incorporate tunnel in mound



Bicycle storage



School shed



Rainbow Bench



Bench opposite school entrance



Ross's Garden



Fence requires improvement

# Tools used for Assessing Current Provision

1. Draw a map of your findings or use the existing school plan if available.
2. Take photos and videos.
3. Make an inventory / list of the existing resources.
4. Observe and interview the children playing at break time and lunch time.
5. Interview the playground supervisors as they are everyday observers and will have an understanding of some of the questions above.
6. Prepare a survey for the classes to provide their views / opinions.
7. Provide a simple school playground plan for the classes to mark up themselves their views / opinions. The pupils can then draw, write, scribble or use stickers to identify things.

# What to do with Findings?

A background image showing a group of children in school uniforms playing in a garden. In the center, there is a large, arched tunnel made of straw or hay. Several children are gathered around the entrance of the tunnel, some looking inside. One child is running in the background on the right. The scene is outdoors with green grass and a wooden fence in the background.

## 1. Gather all information together and look for:

- common themes
- priorities raised
- opportunities

These can then be highlighted on a plan and as a list that will be developed further once more research is done in the following items.

## 2. Research school playgrounds to get ideas for possible opportunities for different types of:

- Active and quiet spaces
- Play Equipment
- Loose Parts
- Materials
- New planters and planting of trees, shrubs, flowers and food
- Seating, meeting and gathering spaces
- Outdoor safety flooring materials and surfaces
- Games painted on concrete areas
- Outdoor art
- Inclusive play spaces
- Sustainability
- Outdoor exhibition area

### 3. Elements to consider further:

- **Consideration should be given to the location of the temporary classrooms** when the school extension is underway.
- **Interview teachers** as they may have ideas as to what things they would like to see to encourage and assist in learning outdoors.
- **Relocation of the Echline Primary School sign** to the main visitor gate as it is hidden within the trees and is not visible from Bo'ness Road. The small wooden Echline Primary sign is too low and does not stand out



Wooden sign is too low and not clearly visible from Bo'ness Road



Hidden Echline Primary School sign is also not visible from Bo'ness Road



- **Possible removal of the raised black rubber paving tiles** in the two separate areas that are adjacent to each other. These are seen as a trip hazard in a small area that becomes a busy thoroughfare at drop offs and pick ups as well as the colour black being unattractive and does not integrate with the natural environment. The relationship between the tiles and the rainbow bench is also very awkward and untidy looking. One side of the tiles is exposed and there are some gaps appearing within the tiles where the connection has come apart. Other locations of rubber paving tiles could be considered and to use natural colours instead.



Consider natural coloured rubber tiles

- **Removal of the black rubber floor grating** and the rundown wooden fence on the edge of the playing field. The connection between the grating and the concrete is extremely untidy and there is loose plastic coming out from the layer under the grating. The grating acts as a trip hazard as well as the unattractive black colour. Consider restoring the grass edge and gradual slope which would then encourage people to use the path around the playing field rather than walk across it.



- **Repair the seating area of the horseshoe and plant new shrubs and flowers** within it. Consider using bark or sand to the central area to make it softer for children jumping down from the wall. Possibility of creating a new sand play area within it if the bench in the centre was to be removed.



- **Consider creating a new sand play area** within the playground if the one within the horseshoe was not possible.



- **Restore Ross's Garden** as currently all the planting is dead and it is full of weeds. Create a variety of planters to grow a range of food, plants and flowers to encourage insects to make their homes there. Restore the pond as it is an asset and will help to attract wildlife to the garden. Consider the opportunity of creating a facility for composting. There is also a possibility of introducing a seating area within it.



Wall Art



Central timber art feature



Sculptural bird table



Pond



Floor Mosaic



Wall Art





- **Consider creating a sensory garden** within the playground or convert Ross's Garden into one. Sensory gardens are beneficial to both children and adults, especially those who have autism and other disabilities. It is carefully designed areas which are devoted to engaging the senses; sight, touch, smell, hear and taste, through the use of plants, flowers, light and sound. The children learn by doing and experience and it has huge benefits by getting them to use all their senses.



- **Encourage the connection with nature** within the playground by creating a varied landscape for play. Consider having an area of longer uncut grass mixed with pathways and shorter grass to assist in breaking up monotonous stretches of grass and create a richer variety of spaces for play. Pupils will also have more opportunity to interact with insect life and trees and shrubs will provide twigs, leaves and seeds as natural materials for play.



- **Utilise the existing planting beds** around the playground that have dead planting or no planting in them and plant as much as possible a variety of shrubs and flowers. Within other areas of the playground, consider **planting new trees, shrubs and wildflowers** which will attract insects and bring nature to the playground. Wildflowers can also be planted under existing trees and in areas of uncut grass to make it more interesting and they could also be planted in Ross's Garden.



The various opportunities of introducing wildflowers

- **Introduce further sustainability** aspects to the playground such as growing food and facilities for composting.



- **Consideration to creating a play tunnel** integrated within the mound where the slide is located.



Existing mound



Opportunity to create play tunnel

- **Repainting of the school** as many areas of the walls are discoloured and patchy. Possibility of introducing some art paintwork or mosaic design on some of the walls as in Ross's Garden and the horseshoe.



The horseshoe



Ross's Garden

- As much as possible aim to **create inclusive play spaces** where disabled and non-disabled can play together. It may not be possible for every child to access every feature or opportunity of the space in the same way, however an inclusive play space aims to enable fulfilling play opportunities for all children.



- Paint games on the concrete areas.** The previous painted games have now almost disappeared and are not motivating to use as parts of them are missing.



Painted games at Echline have almost disappeared

- Introducing outdoor art** within the playground to bring beauty, fun and meaning to the space. It can also be used to enhance other features or create a focal point for meeting spaces. A timber art feature acts as a focal point in Ross's Garden.



Focal point in Ross's Garden



This was designed by school children as art feature and climbing structure



- **Introducing local distinctiveness** by creating distinctive spaces and learning experiences that help pupils to learn about, celebrate and develop a sense of affection for their local place and heritage. This could be through planting locally important plants, using local materials, techniques and crafts people to create structures or it could be interpreted through outdoor art.



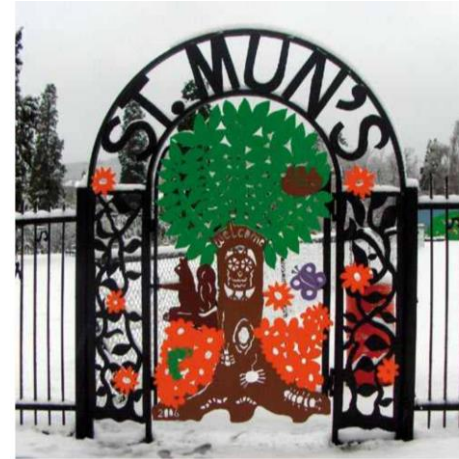
- **Introducing an outdoor exhibition area** where the school can display children's artwork or current school news / updates. This could be located by the school office entrance.



- **Relocation of the school facilities** such as the shed, bicycle storage and bins if these are located in places where they are an obstacle. Other locations should be considered in order to integrate them as well as to improve their appearance if required.



- Enhancing all entrances to the school** to create an attractive and welcoming sense of arrival for the children coming to school as well as a positive sense of place for the community. For example, the main entrance on Bo'ness Road could be widened. Whether it would be possible to widen the gate itself or if not, widen the paving area and removing the bin and railings. New bins would be positioned at the edge rather than as an obstacle. Railing could still be used but could be created as an art feature like the railings used in the High Street next to the Registrars Office. The new gate would proudly have our school logo on it to create a stronger presence of the school not only to the community but to people travelling by. Each entrance would need to be surveyed and assessed.



Echline main entrance



# The Vision

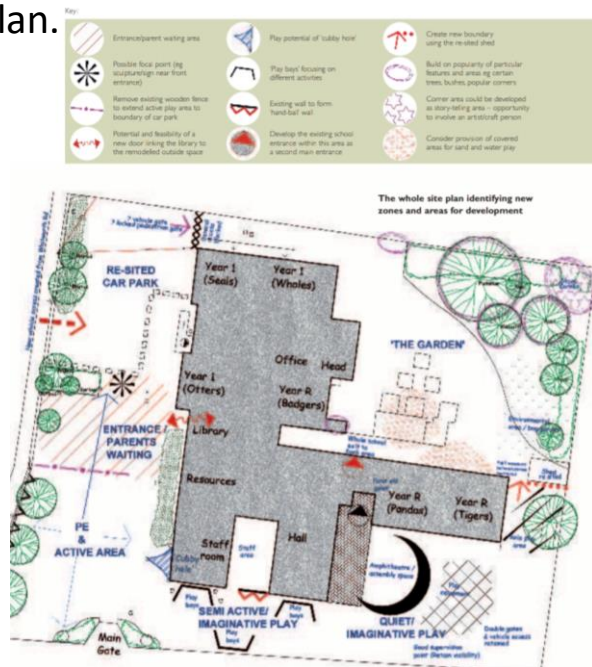
Having undertaken a thorough audit of the current provision, the way the playground is used and designed, researched playgrounds and looked at the elements that could be considered further, it is time to use this information to develop your school's vision for outdoor learning and play in your playground. The concept and purpose behind your vision will help others to understand why there is a need for change. A vision statement will drive and inform improvements in the way your playground is used and developed. It should not only reflect the priorities of your school plan but should also have a character and purpose of its own. As an example.....

***'Ensure children of all ages and abilities have a fun, educational, safe play environment and the opportunity to be happy, healthy, active, positive and productive. Play builds healthy vibrant humans. Play nice and play often!'***

# Developing Options

**Design 2 or 3 layout options** for the school playground using a school plan. Consider all the information gathered in the findings, research, elements to consider further and your vision statement discussed above. The plans can be drawn in two ways,

**1.** Draw symbols on the plan to represent each structure / change you are proposing. List all the symbols alongside what they represent in a key which should be clearly listed next to the plan.



OR

**2.** Draw the proposed structures / changes on the plan as if you are looking down on them. Label each structure either within the plan or with an arrow to the outside of the drawn area. Try to keep the text as visible as possible so that it is easy to read and understand. No key would be required.



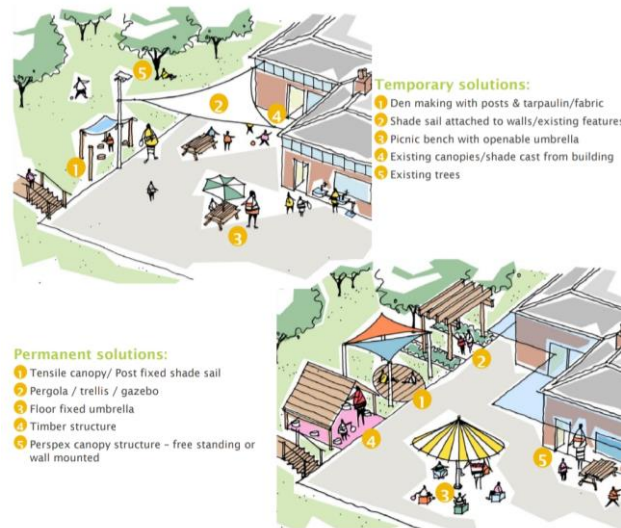


You should use only one of the methods for all the options. All plans should be supported by their own **images and sketches to show the vision** of what you are aiming to create. Once these have been developed, discuss the options with each class to give their opinions, views and preferences to which option they like.



**Seating Ideas:**

- 1 Folding camp seat
- 2 'Ecobrick' seat made from recycled materials
- 3 Clip on seat
- 4 Gabion square seat with timber/plastic top
- 5 Hay bales
- 6 Resource storage

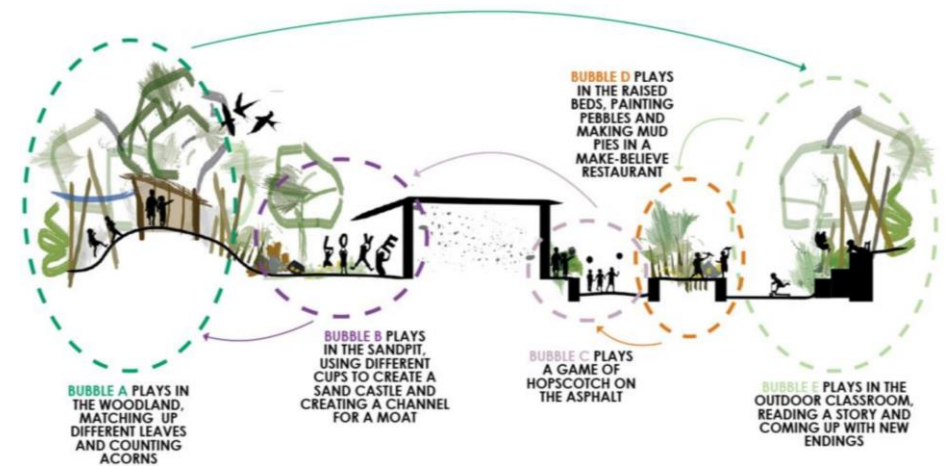


**Temporary solutions:**

- 1 Den making with posts & tarpaulin/fabric
- 2 Shade sail attached to walls/existing features
- 3 Picnic bench with openable umbrella
- 4 Existing canopies/shade cast from building
- 5 Existing trees

**Permanent solutions:**

- 1 Tensile canopy/ Post fixed shade sail
- 2 Pergola / trellis / gazebo
- 3 Floor fixed umbrella
- 4 Timber structure
- 5 Perspex canopy structure - free standing or wall mounted



# Final Plan

From the layouts developed, you may find that the majority prefer one of the options or two. If there are two options preferred, look at combining the elements that pupils have highlighted that they like on the options and put them into one final plan. Once you have taken on board all the comments made from the discussions, draw your final plan for the school playground. The plan should be supported with images and sketches to show your final vision.

The final plan can then be presented to the school for implementation.