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*General further
Education † Source:
SFA National Success
Rates Tables

Education

Great outdoor



Children at The Gates Primary School explore the great outdoors in their new outside classroom funded by a National Lottery Grant

By Saiqa Chaudhari
saiqa.chaudhari@nqnw.co.uk

YOU'RE never too young to experience the great outdoor — just ask the tots at a West-houghton primary school.

The Gates Primary School hit it lucky on the National Lottery to win a grant of £10,000 which has transformed its early years foundation stage outdoor area.

Features include a texture kitchen, sandpit and stage. There is also a gym space which includes a boxing bag and gloves.

The outdoor area is designed to engage all the senses of the little ones so they can learn

through play, which will engage all their senses.

Teachers say that the area will help develop children's vocabulary as they describe and explain what they are doing while they learn maths through measuring skills.

The sandpit will encourage children to explore and develop their gross-motor development and on stage their can explore their creative side — with the gym area having an impact in and out of the classroom.

The youngsters are already making themselves at home in their new area.

Ronnie Slater, business manager, said: "This is allowing the children to take part in a upcoming popular sport whilst developing the strength in the

muscle groups of the shoulder, elbow and wrist.

"This is showing to have greater impact on children's early mark making and pencil grip.

"Our 'stage' is again allowing children to take on imaginative roles, creating music and story telling."

She added: "These new spaces are increasing children's confidence and heightening imagination and creativity through very popular choices of play."

The outdoor area cost £6,000 and the rest was used to organise regular trips and involve parents in the activities.

"At The Gates Primary we secured a Lottery Grant to provide 'Forest school' learning activities through organising a

Old Boys create a bond

ONE of the most impressive aspects of Bolton School that I have found in my time here is the vibrancy and engagement of the Old Boys or alumni network.

The sense that those who have passed through the school valued their time there and will engage with those who are in the school in the present day is a remarkable and significant strength.

The first aspect of this strength is the sense of continuity it brings between the generations.

Old Boys, of course that term does not imply any great age — the youngest are 19 years old straight from school, come back to school to give of their time to inspire the current pupils with both their talents and the tales of their lives. This raises aspirations as well as informing. This can be

TALKING HEADS



Philip Britton, head of Bolton School boys' division

at careers events, special lectures or in some cases where travel is tricky, by Skype.

The presence and involvement of adults other than teachers in education is something that is important to any school. If we label schools as the preserve of the young and those paid to work with them we

■ Focus on Education every Tuesday in The Bolton News

fun for pupils



Children at The Gates Primary School learn through play

school trip out up Rivington for nursery children and weekly activities that took place on the school grounds for reception children.

“We concluded this learning by holding a celebration session after school for children and their family were we made pizza and toasted marshmallow on a fire pit.”

The philosophy of Forest Schools is to encourage and inspire individuals of any age through positive outdoor experiences.

A number of schools have transformed their grounds to become outdoor classrooms to enhance children’s learning and development and complement what they learn in class.



Children play in their new outdoor classroom

between generations

make them too separate. We miss the chance for a much wider educational experience and to bind the generations together with the common cause of building a strong society.

In the past few months we have met a World Champion mountain biker, a chess Grandmaster as well as members of a whole range of professions. And in a few weeks an old Boy will drop by in his RAF helicopter. Giving of time and talents in this way enhances the experience of school life for all. It also helps the pupils value school life if they see a wide range of adults engage in their world.

Another impressive aspect of this engagement is in charitable giving. One in five boys and girls at Bolton School are funded by bursaries. Of those a good

number have free places. That is funded almost entirely by mostly anonymous charitable donations from former pupils. So often I hear people tell the story of their own school days, the difference made by a good teacher, an affection for the school and a strong sense of wanting to ‘give back’, so that a future generation can also benefit. The set of values that lead to his sense of giving back is immensely impressive and commendable.

And finally the Old Boys’ association has a large number of events where former school friends socialise and enjoy one another’s company. I am most impressed by the Old Boys of my school. It is an example of a set of attitudes that are the hallmark of a strong society and the sort of community in which we would all wish to live.

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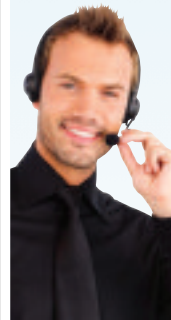


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