

Staff online training in biodiversity

Provider: Learning through Landscapes

School: Millbrook Primary School

Number on roll: 314

Two teachers at Millbrook Primary School completed online training modules on the subject of biodiversity, produced by Learning through Landscapes. They shared their knowledge with colleagues after working with the children to increase awareness of birds and pollinators in their school grounds.



“It has been engaging for staff and pupils. Pupils are spending more quality time outside the classroom and are not realising the depth of their learning experience because of the fun they are having.” That sums up the benefits staff have noticed after re-opening the secret garden. Other benefits include better cooperation and help developing self-esteem and wellbeing.





Before the project, the secret garden was rarely used and became run down. Even though it is in a good location (hidden in the middle of the school), teachers and pupils preferred to visit the forest school area. The secret garden was bare and used as a dumping ground for skip items. When pupils completed the survey, they found little or no habitats which meant no birds or pollinators visited the area making it an unattractive place to go.

After discussion with the children in KS2 about the changes that needed to be made, it was decided that each class would take responsibility for a part of the project. This would ensure that all children would have a voice and help make a difference. Pupils completed their observations before beginning the project and identified what was needed to help improve biodiversity within the secret garden.



During the project, we realised that good communication between classes was important in order to maintain and improve the secret garden.



The school discussed with the local authority the need to stop mowing certain areas to increase biodiversity and give responsibility to pupils to maintain areas of long grass. Pupils increased biodiversity in the secret garden by planting a range of pollinator-friendly flowers. Pupils enjoyed making bug hotels and bird feeders. At first, the children felt disappointed because every day the bird feeders would be on the floor and the seeds were all eaten by squirrels, but they soon realised that the work they were completing was attracting a range of pollinators and wildlife.



“I enjoy spending more time outside and working with my friends.”

The secret garden has become very popular and adds to the variety of environments that pupils and teachers can use throughout the day. It provides the pupils with the opportunity to work and interact with each other in a different way.

Staff have been surprised by the high levels of engagement and cooperation. It has been great for teachers to include cross-curricular links when completing the activities. Staff have been able to plan lessons based on the four purposes with the LNF and DCF strands embedded throughout. Some pupils who find it difficult to engage in classroom situations found it beneficial learning outside and cooperated with others better.



The school has a number of other plans to make the school become biodiverse. For example, increasing opportunities to grow more fruit and vegetables so the children get a better understanding of where food comes from, as well as continuing to improve the school’s carbon footprint. The pupils are also aware of the importance of ongoing maintenance of the area.



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