



SOVEREIGN
Bringing imagination into play

Case study

Our Lady Immaculate RC Primary School | Liverpool



“June Russell, the Area Manager for Sovereign, has been outstanding throughout the whole process – as has the whole team. They have put a huge amount of time and effort into getting it just right. The communication and high level of customer care has been excellent. Even the installation teams couldn’t have been more helpful. When the sails finally went up, the parents that had gathered gave a huge cheer, to express their delight”.

Mrs Brody, Head Teacher, Our Lady Immaculate RC Primary School



Our Lady Immaculate RC Primary School | Liverpool

A primary school in Liverpool has created an outdoor environment that offers its pupils a multitude of ways to encourage greater levels of engagement and co-operative play.

The issue:

Twelve months ago Our Lady Immaculate RC Primary School in Liverpool had a very large outside play area for the children, comprising the upper and lower playgrounds. Although an ideal area to run around on, the space was completely open to the elements and there were no facilities that could stimulate the children into more creative play or learning.

The resolution:

Mrs Brody, the inspirational head teacher at Our Lady Immaculate, knew that she wanted to create a number of different outside play and teaching areas, providing a stimulating playground environment that would facilitate more imaginative play and learning.

A priority for Mrs Brody was something that would provide a 'WOW' factor and she developed a wish list of the things she wanted incorporated such as a shaded area to protect the children from the sun and an outdoor teaching area. She also knew what she didn't want anything that would be prescriptive or offer 'closed' play, such as heavily themed equipment.

The process:

Three playground equipment companies were briefed and asked to put a proposal together. The final decision on who to appoint came down to the children and they chose Sovereign because they found the pictures of the play equipment on offer the most appealing. The consultative planning process began with teachers, parents and pupils asked for input, feedback and recommendations on the facilities required.

The result was a very specific list that included:

- An area to sit and talk with their friends
- A games area
- A quiet area
- A play house
- A colourful play area
- An outside learning area
- An outdoor swimming pool

Although Mrs Brody felt the outdoor pool was a little ambitious, she felt sure the other requirements could be achieved with a lot of imagination, good planning and a suitable budget.

Detailed on-going discussions took place between the school and June Russell, the Area Manager for Sovereign. Three sets of plans were drawn up, with each version discussed at length and tweaked and enhanced, until the final plans were in place and work could begin.

The installation:

Over a period of time several distinct areas were set up:

1. The Outside Learning Area:

Situated in the upper playground, this space was aimed specifically at the foundation pupils aged four to five and included clearly defined spaces to accommodate several groups of children and/or activities. Sub-areas included:

- **A Literacy Area:** with a story telling chair and toadstool imaginative seating positioned under a
- **Pergola casting dappled shade:** Artificial grass adds a sensory, calming surface.
- **A Quiet Area:** consisting of simple wooden benches and further toadstool seating positioned around a graphic playground marking of a pond.
- **Drape Posts:** very simple versatile posts from which cord can be linked, offering the opportunity for den making, washing-line activities and music making.
- **Magnetic Wall Boards and Ground Markings:** playground markings were chosen with care to be versatile; e.g. the spot circle with a centre spot, which can be used as a human clock, for spelling games and even to learn French words.

2. The Amphitheatre:

The school already had a small elliptical grass stage, with seating arranged in a crescent shape. The head wanted to enhance this area with something bold and creative. First of all Sovereign replaced the ground surface with artificial grass which provides a more practical, all year round surface. Then to create a frame for the area and provide a 'WOW' factor, they installed a multi-coloured sail canopy, consisting of three triangular sails radiating from a central post positioned behind the stage, which provides an effective sun shade.

3. Lower Playground:

The school wanted a bright and colourful play area on the lower playground. Sovereign divided the playground into two sections by using large colourful pencils. On one side is the quieter imaginary play zone, complete with a large wooden play lodge and imaginative playground markings. The other side of the pencils is used as a more traditional playground with plenty of room for the



The benefits:

- The school has achieved its objective in providing a stimulating environment, in which the pupils can benefit greatly from non-classroom based learning and creative play.
- Practical benefits include, seating areas, shaded areas, protection from wind and rain and a mud-free ground surface.
- The environment is colourful, stimulating and has WOW factor. The parents, teachers and pupils all benefit from these enhancements

Future developments:

Mrs Brody is currently applying for funding to build a sheltered area adjacent to the proposed new school entrance. The head has invited Sovereign to suggest some imaginative ideas to create a cheerful welcome seated area for both parents and visitors.



T: 01702 291129
www.sovereignplayequipment.co.uk

Sovereign Design Play Systems Limited, 40 Towerfield Road
 Shoeburyness, Southend-On-Sea, Essex, SS3 9QT