



SOVEREIGN
Bringing imagination into play

Case study

Springside with Hamer County Primary | Rochdale



"Sovereign listened very carefully and really understood the needs of the children. They were very flexible and efficient. They have also come up with creative ideas about how to adapt equipment in a cost effective way. I would recommend them."

Jane Herring, Head Teacher of Springside School



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Hamer Primary School and Springside School merged to form a newly joined school, Springside with Hamer County Primary, which opened in September 2007. Springside caters for pupils with special needs and shares many of the facilities with Hamer, a mainstream school.

The issue:

As it was a new school, there were no existing play facilities on site and so it was a blank canvas. The two head teachers of the schools, Jane Herring (Springside School) and Jan Smith (Hamer School) wanted to create a well constructed, interesting play area to cater for all the pupils.

The resolution:

The head teachers decided that they wanted to provide a play area in which both mainstream pupils and those with special needs could interact together. Their main needs were that the areas had to be interactive, sensory, and challenging to allow the children to learn.

The process:

The school chose Sovereign to carry out the initial phase of the work because it was felt they really listened to the needs of the pupils. Following its successful installation in 2008, Mrs Herring invited June Russell, Area Manager for Sovereign, to return and discuss further designs for four different areas on the site. June made suggestions about what equipment would suit the school's needs. The equipment is expected to be installed soon.

The installation:

Phase One:

It was decided there would be an area for each school, as well as a shared space. For Hamer School pupils there were a variety of playground markings created, which included skipping zones, activity trails, and traditional hopscotch. For Springside pupils there were imaginative colourful playground markings in the quiet/outdoor classroom area along with some sensory music panels. The shared area consisted of two low level wooden adventure trails on the grass, with rubber grass saver tiles underneath to prevent muddy patches developing.

Phase Two:

- Area 1: Sensory area

An eight-metre sail shade canopy will be put up in the centre of the area, which provides excellent protection from UV rays. A wooden round table specially adapted to allow wheelchair access will also be put in place. A wooden pergola with a green net roof allows sensory climbing plants to be grown and pupils can enjoy sitting on the wooden benches underneath. There will also be markings of colourful bumble bees, butterflies and flowers.

- Area 2: Adventure trail equipment

Following the success of the simple wooden trails installed in phase one, this new equipment provides more challenging physical pieces for the children, and is designed to enhance their co-ordination skills.

- Area 3: Springside general tarmac playground

A Foxtail climbing tower with blue 'wet pour' safety surfacing beneath provides a good combination of imaginative and physical play. Access to the upper deck is via a climbing ramp, and the exit is either via a fireman's pole or a slide. A washing line can be attached to wooden drape posts, which have pre-drilled holes, and can be used to make a den or create music. Underneath is a circular artificial grass surface and sensory play panels.

- Area 4: Internal quadrangle

A waterproof octagonal gazebo will provide an outdoor classroom, which has been specially adapted to only have a shelf seat along two of the seven panelled sides to facilitate wheelchair users. A gentle ramped 'hump back bridge' will provide the opportunity for wheelchair users and others to practise mobility skills.

The benefits:

- Adapted to suit the needs of all the pupils
- The equipment provides a fun and interesting learning facility
- Aids the pupils' educational, emotional and physical development



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