



SOVEREIGN
Bringing imagination into play

Case study

St Augustine's C of E Primary School
Salford | Manchester



"Sovereign has been fantastic; completely transforming our outdoor space and providing a fun and stimulating outdoor environment for our pupils. I believe Sovereign has been instrumental in helping us achieve an 'excellent' grading in our Ofsted School Report"

Clare Campbell, Head teacher, St Augustine's C of E Primary School



St Augustine's C of E Primary School Salford, Manchester

St Augustine's is an exciting and vibrant Church of England primary school in Salford, Manchester. Located in an urban area, the school had no grass or other natural greenery and the outdoor play areas were bland and uninspiring.

The issue:

Prior to the involvement of Sovereign Design Play Systems, the outdoor space at St Augustine's offered no stimulation for the pupils and did not reflect the school's energetic, forward-thinking teaching culture. Due to the lack of stimulation, the school was experiencing poor behaviour during play times, which was carrying over to the classroom environment. With Sovereign's help, the school has completely turned this situation around, with improved behaviour across all ages.

The resolution:

Head teacher, Clare Campbell, first contacted Sovereign in spring 2009, having joined St Augustine's at the start of the year. Sovereign's Area Manager, June Russell, had an initial meeting with Mrs Campbell to discuss her requirements and has worked with the school on a three-year phased programme of improvements to totally transform the outdoor environment.

The process:

Sovereign has worked in close consultation with Mrs Campbell to create a variety of stimulating, visually appealing outdoor areas. Using the school's colour – red – as a focal point in the designs, Sovereign has designed and installed a range of playground equipment, seating areas, all-weather parasols and an eco-garden, which earned the school an Eco-Schools Green Flag Award, which is awarded by the Foundation for Environmental Education.

The installation:

Phase One:

The first project undertaken was the creation of a welcoming focal point to the school's main entrance. Sovereign designed the area to incorporate generous sweeping curves of artificial grass, with groups of wooden seating and planters. Red toadstools were also installed to provide additional seating and to provide a splash of vibrancy in the school's colour.

At this time, a number of very old, tired-looking shelters were also removed. The original plan was to replace them with something similar but, after talking through the alternative options that Sovereign could offer, Mrs Campbell chose contemporary parasols, again in the school colour of red, to add a real 'wow' factor. A group of three parasols were fitted in the main playground, with round tables beneath them which has created an outdoor, all-weather classroom and quiet area that doubles as a waiting area for parents at the end of the school day.

A further two parasols were installed in the Foundation Stage area to give the children free access to the nursery's outdoor space, whatever the weather.

A 'Peaches' climbing tower was also installed in the main playground, which provides

multiple levels for play and exploration and a variety of access routes to enable children of different ages and abilities to play together.

Phase Two:

Over the following two years, three further projects were completed. The first of the three was the introduction of outdoor play equipment to promote music and drama. A stage with a red, laminate backdrop was the first feature to be installed and was an instant success with the pupils. This was followed six months later by the addition of outdoor musical panels. These proved so successful that the following year, further musical panels were added.

The second of the three projects was the installation of a sensory garden at the side of the school, to which Sovereign added a story-telling chair encircled by clusters of red toadstool seating.

The third stage was to re-skim the tarmac on the existing playground and apply new colourful markings to encourage popular games like hop-scotch.

Phase Three:

The nursery at the school had a small patch of grass to the side and back of its area which was out of bounds much of the time when the grass was too wet. Sovereign replaced this with artificial grass, installing a 'mound' and a poly tunnel at the same time.

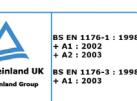
Final plans for the foundation areas include the installation of an outdoor sand and water play station, outdoor storage and a wipe-clean, mark making panel with paint pot holders.

The benefits:

- The relationship between St Augustine's school and Sovereign has grown steadily from an initial, relatively small project to encompass a far more extensive programme of work.



- Mrs Campbell has been so pleased with the work carried out that she has planned further improvements following completion of each step of the process.
- School staff, governors and parents are delighted with the results; the children's behaviour has markedly improved and staff morale is at an all time high.



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