

Cila Primary School is located in Upper Killay, approximately four miles from the centre of Swansea, and can accommodate around 150 pupils. The main building was originally built in 1910 and, over the past century, this has been extended and extra demountable classrooms added. The popularity of the school is shown by the fact that it is currently oversubscribed with 33% of pupils coming from outside the schools catchment area.

What we have done

The school grounds have gradually been developed and features introduced over several years, in many instances to exploit unused spaces or remove hazards.

At the front of the school, there is a play fort, island and a boat-shaped outdoor classroom, used for reading, group discussion and imaginative play. Alongside this is fixed play equipment on a soft surface area known as a “Shop and Slide Unit.”

There is also a memorial garden, used by parents waiting to pick up children.



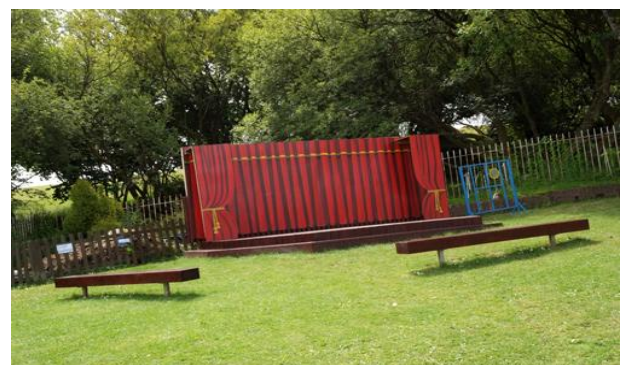
About eight years ago, an outdoor learning space for Early Years pupils was created in an unused area between demountable classrooms, with a wooden play chalet and a large covered sandpit nearby. The Nursery play area/yard has also been resurfaced with a mixture of black green and red safety tiles.

A sensory garden was created three years ago with reclaimed stone, a mural and a water feature. The school found that boys enjoyed reading outdoors and

so this space, with a nearby covered area, was provided. Pupils benefit from sensory stimulation creating the perfect place to spark children’s imagination. The garden offers the benefits of an area for quietness, reflection, relaxation and an area to develop social and emotional education. The children staff and parents can work outside in the garden or samples can be brought into the classroom for more hands on practical activities. This stimulating outdoor environment benefits pupils and all members of the school community.

The school has created an outdoor stage together with a solid curtain backdrop. The stage is used at the end of the summer term for the annual “Summer Serenade” – a summer concert watched by parents and community members. The pupils use the area on a daily basis and it greatly inspires creative play. It is a great addition to the school playground and it gives pupils an opportunity to develop their imaginations and work together. The children also enjoy performing outdoors for class and celebration assemblies for the schools community. The project has also developed children’s speaking and listening, social skills, self expression team work and self motivation.

The main playground and grassed area to the rear of the school buildings have been extensively enhanced with an adventure play area, a performance stage with curtain, raised decking, outdoor classrooms and seating areas, a turf-roofed roundhouse, playground markings, apple trees and traditional board games fixed to fencing. Two sides of the playground are bordered by colourful wooden fences shaped and painted to represent giant pencils.



Boardwalks have been constructed on one side of the playground on what had been an unusable and unsafe banked area. Animal cut-outs based on wildlife found in and around the Gower are placed along the edge of this zone and seating areas have been placed on sections of the retaining wall.

“Wishing Trees” were also developed in an unused corner of the main school yard. The school worked with a local artist in designing the trees as a memorial to a parent. Children painted pegs and wrote their wishes before placing them in the tree.

A bird nest box has been erected with an observation camera inside.

Each class has its own raised bed for growing vegetables, which are then sold to the community. There is also a composting area.

The grounds are regularly used for assemblies and concerts, and children eat outside during the summer and are allowed to use musical instruments in the performance areas during playtimes and listen to music. Teaching assistants oversee different areas of the grounds during playtimes to support a range of activities.



How we went about it

It was decided that the grounds needed to be enhanced in order to support increased use of the outdoors across the whole school. Improvements to the outside space were included in the School Improvement Plan but it was agreed that the playground should be retained, with the addition of yard markings, and so the focus for development was primarily disused areas around the site.

The school gardening club worked with the Killay Gardening Club to design and carry out research for the sensory garden, and pupils submitted a successful funding application to the Gower Society. An artist worked with the children on decorative panels. The adventure play area was designed by the pupils and funded by the PTA. Local disaffected young people helped with clearance work and the construction of features e.g. raised decking and the ‘Cila Caribbean’ boat.



How we got the resources

The Welsh Assembly Government gave funding for the outdoor classroom, a soft play area for the nursery was part funded by the LEA, a Community Focussed Schools grant contributed towards the stage and sensory garden, the Gower Society gave a grant which was used to buy plants and garden items. Plants were donated by the Singleton Botanical Gardens, a local garden centre, Governors and parents. Reclaimed stone was used for construction work of the water feature.

The Council's Property Services resurfaced the yard and match funding for several projects came from the Council's health and safety grants.

What next

- set up a low level adventure trail with scrambling net
- continue boardwalks with more animal cut outs
- install a climbing or traversing wall
- create a mural to celebrate school's centenary
- a mural around the P.E. shed to depict athletics and the 2012 Olympics

Top tips

- be imaginative, have a vision, be persistent
- outside artists and developers should work with pupils on design and implementation
- an active school council can be useful
- think carefully before changing things – don't remove things you value



We looked at **Key Question 7:** from the schools Inspection in March 2007

How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Comments from Inspection report:

162 Pupils have access to a good range of learning resources.

164 The school building and site is very well maintained. There is an outstanding collection of playground games and activities for pupils. The school has a garden that the pupils care for. The play area for the under fives is enclosed and includes a covered which is used well as an outdoor classroom.



165 Classrooms are bright and attractive and promote a good working environment.

166 The school makes efficient and effective use of the full range of resources available. Furthermore, skilled financial management and strategic planning has a considerable impact on the value for money provided by the school.

170the school's success in continuing to improve the quality of its provision, it continues to provide good value for money.

Using the “**Guidance for the Inspection of Primary Schools September 2010**” cross referenced this with the new **Common Inspection Framework**

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

1.2 Wellbeing

1.2.3 Community involvement and decision making

Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which pupils, including those from different groups, take on responsibilities and play a part in the school and wider community. You should consider pupils participation in decision making, including the effectiveness of the school council. You should judge the extent to which the school council gives pupils an opportunity to be involved in decision making, gives them responsibility and makes them feel valued. You should consider the extent to which all pupils, including those from different groups, are involved in making decisions about their life in school.



Good levels of wellbeing

They enjoy physically active pursuits.



Key Question 2: How good is provision?

2.1 Learning experiences

- The planning of learning experiences is successful in engaging the full range of pupils;

(Outdoor provision not just for Foundation Phase also translates enhanced learning areas and activities at KS2)

Links with community, Upper Killay Gardening Club, Governors, Grandparents, Parents, Caretaker

Communication, Literacy Skills/ ICT Competitions - posters in local community

School Gardening Club selling home-grown produce in the community (raised beds)

You should consider the nature and extent of out-of-school learning, including sports, clubs, visits, special events, links with the community and other extra-curricular activities. You should also consider how effective the arrangements are for delivering these and how they cohere with mainstream curriculum planning.

2.1.4: education for sustainable development and global citizenship

- the school acts sustainably, for example in using energy, minimising waste and recycling,

School Eco Council, Composting

2.4 Learning environment

2.4.2: physical environment

Inspectors should judge whether:

- accommodation provides a stimulating and well-maintained learning environment to support teaching and learning;
- accommodation is sufficient for the number of pupils and the activities offered;
- toilet and changing facilities are appropriate; and
- the school buildings and grounds are well maintained.

Good learning environment

The school is an inclusive community, where pupils receive equal access to all areas of the schools provision. There is a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. An ample supply of good quality resources is well matched to pupils learning needs. Full use is made of relevant and available resources in the community to supplement and enrich the curriculum. The accommodation is of good quality and is well maintained.



Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

3.4 Resource management

3.4.1 Management of staff and resources

Inspectors should judge how efficiently and effectively leaders and managers plan and carry out strategies to manage staff and resources.

.....how well the school plans and carries out effective strategies to ensure and monitor that the school delivers value for money in the way it manages resources.

- provide the best standards of accommodation possible within the schools budget; and
- ensure that pupils have enough appropriate learning resources.

You should concentrate less on the detail of the financial budgets than on the extent to which the school's spending decisions and broad financial planning are based on priorities for expenditure on improvement over time.

3.4.2: value for money

Evaluate

.....the extent to which it makes good use of the funding it receives.

The school's spending decisions relate well to priorities for improvement and the benefit of the pupils.

The outdoor provision at Cila can support the areas identified above in the sub divisions of the three Key Questions.

Obviously some links are stronger than others and some are quite tenuous.

