

Greenwood Primary School nature playground project

We are excited to tell you about a new school project which will we think the children will love. The new GPS nature-playground will give children a fun, unstructured, nature-inspired environment where they can play, learn, explore and get closer to the natural world.

Most of us remember our childhoods filled with roaming neighbourhoods, parks or the countryside. Hours would be spent in the great outdoors exploring, making up new games with friends, using our imagination, having adventures, and often getting dirty! Research proves what most of us suspected – these were the rich learning experiences, helping us become adults who are resilient, adventurous, active, confident, self-sufficient and have high self-esteem. These are the very skills and traits we want to encourage in children at Greenwood PS to help them grow into successful and contributing members of our community.

Sadly, many children these days don't get these opportunities. Like a number of other schools and parks across Perth and around the world, we want to bring a bit of nature and adventure into the school grounds.



The nature playground

A nature playground is a natural extension of the school's recent successes in improving play opportunities for children:

- Introduced loose-parts play – which is the opportunity for children to enjoy unstructured play with a trove of different materials and objects.
- Opened up a nature strip along the edge of the school to give the children a more interesting, nature-based free space.
- Removed play “area” restrictions for various year groups – Years 1 to 6

The new playground will be an environment open to all age groups, made mostly of natural materials, where children will be able to challenge themselves and learn to understand and manage risk. Children play and learn through their senses. We'll look to reuse interesting and inspiring materials to make it immersive and to feed their imaginations.

Why is risky play important?

It is widely known that children are now given less opportunities to engage in risky play than the children of previous generations. So what exactly are modern children missing out on?

'Children and young people themselves recognise that 'you can't make everything safe' and that a balance is needed between risks and fun. Children recognise that knowing about risks and how to manage them is an essential part of growing up... Through play, children are able to learn about risks and use their own initiative. If children and young people are not allowed to explore and learn through playing and taking part in positive activities, they will not learn how to judge risks and manage them for themselves. These skills learnt through play and other activities can act as a powerful form of prevention in other situations where children and young people are at risk.' (Play England, 2007)

