

Annual Report 2003-2004



SureStart

Bacup and Stacksteads



Project:- Neighbourhood Nursery Play Areas

Project Annual Report

Neighbourhood Nursery Play Areas

Background

Bacup and Stacksteads Sure Start is a Round 3 Programme of the recent government initiative of investment in improving the social, emotional and educational lives of pre-school children and their families.

Sure Start Local Programmes are situated in areas which fall into the 20% most deprived wards, by definition of the Indices of Deprivation in Britain, of which Bacup has three, Greensclough, Irwell and Stacksteads.

The Programme received approval in 2001 and the task of recruiting staff began with the appointment of the Programme Manager in November of that year closely followed by the appointment of the Programme Administrator. Between November 2001 and August 2004 staff were recruited and services were delivered from temporary offices and rented space around the town.

During this period architects, builders and partners met to plan and eventually refurbish an old Victorian Baths in the centre of town which would become the Sure Start building now called The Maden Centre. The team and majority of services eventually relocated in August 2004.

Targets met by Neighbourhood Nursery Play Areas Project

Sure Start Targets

Objective 1 Improving Social and Emotional Development

Objective 2 Improving Health

Objective 3 Improving Learning

Objective 4 Strengthening Families and Communities

SRB Targets

- 6A area of land improved/reclaimed for open space
- 7Ai Number of new community facilities (i) the number of local people given access to new community health opportunities/facilities
- 8C Number of individuals involved in voluntary work

Bacup and Stacksteads Sure Start Challenge Fund

An Appraisal Form was submitted to the Challenge Fund in 2002/03. It outlined the aforementioned Sure Start Targets and SRB Outcomes and addressed the following issues:-

- To increase outdoor play opportunities for a minimum of 48 children and enhance their well being

- To support community members in accessing experience in gardening, building, design and maintenance.
- To enhance services to include people with special needs.
- In the long term the outdoor area will be available for community usage outside of normal working hours.

In the DfEE Good Practice in Childcare document re Using Physical Activity, it states that participation can have huge benefits for children, young people and those with special needs. It states that with appropriate opportunities and participation for the right reasons it can help them to:

- Build confidence, self esteem and independence
- Develop health and fitness
- Develop social skills and provide social stimulation
- Be creative and imaginative
- Develop discipline, co-operation and commitment
- Cope with success and failure
- Develop a sense of fair play
- Form a basis for life-long participation in physical activity and sport

The proposed outdoor and covered play areas were intended to meet the following needs:

- Educational needs –in the DfEE Good Practice in Childcare Document, it states that physical activity makes a unique contribution to the development of the whole child. Research evidence suggests there is a positive correlation between physical activity and academic achievement, as well as an improvement in children’s behaviour and the development of social interaction.
- Health needs – encourages the normal development of young children by allowing access to open air large spaces that aid gross motor development. Research into the outdoor curriculum has shown that young children do not participate in outdoor activities that raise the heart rate as trends in recent times have moved towards more sedentary activities e.g .computers. also parents’ anxieties over safety issues have reduced the outdoor activities of children. Girls in particular do less physical activity than boys. As the heart is a muscle which needs exercise to develop the lack of physical activity in children could lead to a future generation of adults with heart defects if early intervention does not take place.
- Meeting the needs for a universal service – the Lancashire EYDCP “ Partners Working Together to Promote Inclusion” document recommends to include in any outdoor area differing tactile surfaces, a sensory garden with aromatic herbs, a quiet area with relaxing music and soft sounds.
- Reduction of negative effects in the long term by the inclusion of the wider community in design, implementation and ongoing maintenance stages so as to encourage ownership thus reducing vandalism and intrusion.

Performance Review

Objective	Projected Outcome	Progress to date
<p>To provide a stimulating outdoor play area for local children.</p> <p>To involve the community in the ongoing development of the play areas.</p>	<p>To provide a safe and accessible outdoor play area for at least 48 local children under 5 years on a daily basis.</p>	<p>Local artists were asked to submit portfolios of their work in Spring 2004 following original designs by Groundwork Rossendale. They were asked to consider the theme of water in keeping with the original usage of the building, a swimming baths. The artist chosen had previously run art workshops for people with disability and was himself disabled. It was felt he would have an insight into the needs of disabled people and would consider issues of Social Inclusion. He commenced by setting up a series of workshops for local families and staff members which were really well attended and received. The designs the parents and children came up with were then interpreted into a mural with the theme of the sea and sea creatures. Also the theme of parents and children was maintained throughout. To encourage children to run around a teddy bear was featured around the mural and children were encouraged to find him. Another local artist who designed wrought iron and mosaics used the community designs to create part of the décor for the indoor/outdoor play area which again incorporated sea and water in its theme. 20 families were</p>

<p>To make the outdoor play area inclusive with a particular emphasis on children with special needs.</p>	<p>involved in the workshops. The area has also been used for supervised contacts by local Social Service Departments for three families which consisted of 5 children under 5 years and their parents/grandparents. 49 children attend the Neighbourhood Nursery and all have regular access to the outdoor and indoor play areas.</p> <p>The area is suitable for people with special needs due to its soft play surfaces, aromatic plants, raised flowerbeds, tactile surfaces, low seating, water feature and tactile surfaces. Groups of young people use the area at night and to date, apart from litter, have not done any damage. Staff have made an effort to invite local youths into the building and outdoor areas to give them a sense of ownership and belonging.</p> <p>TARGET MET</p>
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Pictures of the play areas





Customer Feedback

What do you think about the outdoor play area?

- Fantastic! Great for the children although I have some concerns since hearing local children have been in at night. What kinds of things might be left lying about?
- Excellent, however the sandcastle could be dangerous if children climb on it. A swing or slide might be useful or a trampoline. The indoor/outdoor area is good so they get fresh air even when the weather is not suitable for outdoor activities.
- My child always talks about it so it must be good.
- Brilliant! There's enough room to play and ride bikes. There's also enough for the imagination to get to grips with i.e. beach theme or pirates on the boat.
- Brilliant and safe.
- Fantastic.

- My children's faces say it all, they think it is amazing and love the outdoor play sessions.
- Fabulous.
- Lovely and safe.
- I think it is really good that the children can still play in a big space where they will not be able to hurt themselves due to the soft flooring.
- Lovely.
- Great – it must be the envy of every nursery in Rossendale

Children who had used the play areas were asked to paint a picture of their favourite part of the outdoor areas and talk about what they did when using the playground. The children painted wonderful pictures of the lighthouse, the boat and the sandcastle and said things like, "I love riding my bike down the sandcastle" and "we sit in the boat and pretend we are pirates".

Conclusions

From the evidence provided within this report it is clear the Challenge Fund monies have been well spent and that the project is on target to meet the objectives outlined in the project proposal. Customer feedback demonstrates the outdoor play areas are well received and well used by the community.

Community Garden

At the rear of the Maden Centre is a space left by an old fuel tank, some waste ground and a slope of grass and trees.

Following public consultation it was felt this land could also be utilised in reaching the SRB and Sure Start targets outlined in the original proposal and within this report.

A series of meetings with parents and other community members were held throughout 2003 and options for usage were discussed. The most popular choice was a Community Garden which would incorporate allotments for growing fruit, flowers and vegetables; a sensory garden, raised growing areas for disabled usage and a comfortable seating area. It was felt in the longer term the vegetables grown could be sold to the Community Café situated within the main building.

The Befriending Coordinator began to recruit volunteers who might be interested in taking on the running of the garden by placing articles in the local press, advertisements in the Sure Start Newsletter and attending Sure Start Family Information Network meetings.

9 people attended the meetings and they began the task of exploring the following issues:-

- Clearing the land of overgrowth and some trees.
- Designing the plots of land.
- Buying tools and equipment.
- Fencing the area
- Making brickwork sound
- Recruiting more volunteers
- Recycling
- Funding

Other Agencies/Organisations Involved

- Rossendale Borough Council Planning Department looking at which trees could be removed, which land could be used, issues re Conservation Area and design and structures which would be acceptable.
- Green Gym from Rochdale and Manchester who are a voluntary group who work on environmental issues have been recruited to clear vegetation and trees. They received approval from the Tree officer at Rossendale Borough Council in December 2004 and will commence the work in January 2005.
- Pennine Forge in Bacup have submitted designs for the metal perimeter fencing which have received approval from the Council. They are in keeping with the environment and for construction, galvanisation, erection and VAT will cost £7017.
- Groundworks Rossendale have produced landscape design and funding through health funding streams and they are to support an Open Meeting for interested parties who wish to become involved in the scheme in January 2005. They are also exploring other funding avenues to establish sustainability for the garden's future.
- Community Futures have been approached for funding.
- The 5 a Day initiative which encourages people to eat more fruit and vegetables have donated £500.
- Barclays Bank £ for £ scheme will be linked to a proposed pledge scheme for plants.
- Applied for grants from B&Q and ASDA late Spring 2005
- Day Opportunities from Whitworth who are a group of Young Adults with Learning difficulties and their Support workers are also involved and are eager to get the "real part", the digging and planting, off the ground in February/March 2005.

Future Plans

The Befriending coordinator will continue to support the Community Garden Working Party and volunteers for the foreseeable future but is working hard to empower the group to take full ownership of the project once the garden is established. She is accessing training regarding the practical side of planting and growing for the community members and also some business training regarding bookkeeping and accessing funds.

Children will have their own growing space and at least 51 children will have access to this from the nursery alone however the intention is to open the space to older children and young people via liaison with schools and youth organisations.

As the garden has been designed to be socially inclusive all community members will be able to access the garden and benefit from its facilities.

A donation of a bench has been made by the parents of a staff member who sadly died so this too will be a facility for the local community.

As preparation work commences in January 2005 it is hoped the garden will be accessible by the summer of 2005.

Financial Information

As finance returns are completed regularly by the Programme Manager this information has already been submitted to the funders and can be read in conjunction with both reports.