

FINAL REPORT

Barnardo's Healthy Schools Plus, Play Pilots 2009.



Projects in Partnership with:
Burnham Infants
Manor Court Primary School, Chard

Supported and Funded by,
The Healthy Schools Team

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Introduction.

This report is really three reports in one. We have been extremely grateful for the wonderful support and belief that Barnardo's has received from the Healthy Schools Team (Clare Laker and Fiona Moir). This has allowed us to have 4 months to develop our ideas and run 2 pilot projects with Burnham Infants and Manor Court Primary School in Chard.

This project started and continues to be based on the simple truth that schools that allow children to play will be healthier schools with healthier children. The programme that we designed and piloted has helped us to develop a model which uses a series of play based interventions to support a school to fundamentally change its play offer to children and achieve the Healthy School+ status whilst it does it.

In the spirit of a pilot there have been mistakes along the way, and we have consciously used this opportunity to try new things and accept that some have worked and some haven't. However, all stakeholders are agreed that these 2 pilots have been successful. They have proved in 3 months that a school with enthusiastic staff can radically overhaul its play culture. Most importantly there has been clear outcomes evidence that this has benefitted children.

We did not ask the 2 pilots to stick rigidly to one way of doing things. The two reports by Kristen Lambert and Helen Marlborough illustrate that the projects developed their own responses to the challenge. The third report here illustrates our conclusions on the two pilots. We have used the learning from the pilots to refine the way we will deliver the Healthy School+, Play Project model with the next wave of schools from September 2009.

Michael Hammond – Children's Services Manager, Barnardo's

Huge thanks for all their hard work goes to;

Clare Laker and Fiona Moir – Healthy Schools Team

Rachel Chainey, Natasha Ford, Kristen Lambert and Helen Marlborough –
Barnardo's Project Team

All the staff and pupils at Burnham Infants and Manor Court, but especially Andrew Marsh, Liz Rosser, Fiona Trott and Dawn Warren.

Final Report. Manor Court Primary School. By Kristen Lambert

I Summary of Project

- 1.1 As a Pilot for the Healthy School's Plus Project, Barnardo's Play and Participation Service worked with Manor Court Primary School with the following aims;
- to improve/develop planning for play and play policies within the school
 - to run 6 outdoor play sessions with a small group of children and young people from different year groups to provide them with challenging and adventurous play experiences.
 - To work with a large number of school pupils to understand how we could make play times more exciting and adventurous.
 - To work with a small, targeted group identified by the school as finding playtimes particularly difficult, to understand why playtimes can be problematic and how we could make them more enjoyable for them.
- 1.2 This report focuses on the 2 consultation elements of the project.

Whole School Consultations

- 2.1 In terms of formal consultations, we worked with approximately 40 children and young people from across the year groups in order to gain a fair representation of the pupils. We talked about different issues around play at the school and how the children and young people thought that these could be improved.
- 2.2 The school also completed play diaries with their class in which children recorded their play experiences at school and what they would like to be improved. These diaries enabled more children to have a say about play at the school.
- 2.3 Before any consultation work began the school was divided in half and each group had one hour to play on the field in anyway they chose. There were lots of exciting resources to play with including;
- Messy play with water, sand and compost;
 - Sports equipment
 - Scrap with large cardboard boxes, bits of material, tubing, plastic containers and tubes, papers, carpet tiles, glue, tape and much more.
 - Junk with tyres, piping and old vacuum cleaner covers (with wheels!!)
 - An area with tents, tarpaulins and pegs.
- 2.4 The children taking part in the consultations were asked what they enjoyed the most during the morning sessions. Children were able to choose more than one activity.

What the children enjoyed - Summary of findings

Tarpaulins, tents etc	23 children
Junk	22 children
Scrap	12 children
Sports	13 children
Messy	9 children

2.2 Other comments included;

- should be the 'upper school only'
- should do this on 'dry day's only'
- 20 children were asked if they liked using the field to play on – 19 said yes
- 17 out of 20 children said that they would like to use it even when it is wet.
- 19 said they would like to use it when hot and sunny. The person who said no to this was concerned about it being too hot and burning themselves.
- All children that were asked wanted the session to be longer.
- 'People want the play project every day' – Year 5 Pupil

3 Cardboard box of ideas – Field Play Consultation

3.1 Approximately 20 children were given a large cardboard box and got into groups of about 6 or 7. The children had access to, pens, paints and colourful sticky post its. They children were asked to decorate the box with their ideas about if and how they would like to use the field at playtimes.

Summary of findings

Fixed Traditional Equipment	6
Sport requiring loose parts	5
Flowers and trees – trees to climb	4
Dens	4
Loose Parts (scrap)	3
Girls Only activities	3
Sand play	3
Animals	3
Sunbathing	2
Water play	2
Dancing/Majorettes	2
Bouncy Castles	2

3.2 The children were asked to specifically consider how they could get more shade onto the field. Ideas included a 'Green umbrella'; tents and dens and 'tall trees'.

3.3 Traditional Fixed equipment seemed to be popular with swings (3) and slides (3) both mentioned.

- 3.4 Sports were very popular here with children and young people choosing football (3), tennis (1) and trampolines (1)
- 3.5 Flowers (1), trees (2) and tree-climbing (1) were all suggested 'tall trees' were specifically requested.
- 3.6 Dens such as treehouses (2), tents (1) and willow dens (1) were also chosen by some.
- 3.7 Scrap loose parts came up 3 times with comments such as 'scrap to play with', 'cardboard boxes' and 'making' appearing on the boxes.
- 3.8 Sand was mentioned 3 times
- 3.9 Girls only activities or areas were mentioned (3)
- 3.10 3 children mentioned animals, these were cats (1) and a bunny rabbit (2)
- 3.11 2 children mentioned that they would like to sunbathe
- 3.12 Bouncy Castles were suggested twice (2)
- 3.13 Dancing (1) and Majorettes (1) were suggested
- 3.14 Water play was mentioned twice one child wanted a 'hydro-heated swimming pool' (1) and one child wanted to have 'water fights'
- 3.15 Other ideas included, a TV, Chocolate, Hoola Hoops and aliens
- 3.16 Comments on the boxes included 'Being Happy' and 'have more excitement out'

Graffiti Wall – General Consultation

- 4.1 Approximately 20 children and young people were given a large piece of card with the heading, 'How could we make playtime better?' They were able to draw or write down ideas to create a graffiti wall. However the children coordinated this activity so that 2 children wrote down the ideas of the others who were shouting out their views and opinions.

Summary of the children's ideas

Sport activities	8 ideas
Food and Drink Outside	7 ideas
Loose Parts	6 ideas
Scrap – arts and crafts	5 ideas
Water	5 ideas
Animals	5 ideas
Climbing/tree based activities	4 ideas

- 4.2 Ideas about sporting activities at playtimes included; bowling, wrestling, horse riding, roller skating (2), football, tennis and 'sport' in general.
- 4.3 Ideas about food and drink outside at playtimes included shops, machines and stands, including smoothie stand.
- 4.4 Ideas involving loose parts included suggestions for tyres, pipes and balls, lego, a light saber, water balloons and cardboard
- 4.5 Ideas involving scrap and arts and crafts included painting, colouring and getting messy.
- 4.6 Ideas about water, included playing in a river with boats, a swimming pool, water balloons, a pool and a bath tub
- 4.7 Activities involving animals included; horses, cows, elephants, snakes and a zoo.
- 4.8 There were suggestions for climbing and activities in trees included a rope swing.

Nature Garden Play Consultation

- 5.1 Approximately 20 children took part in this activity in the nature garden. The children were given a camera between 3 or 4 and asked to take photographs of things that they liked about the pond area or things that they would change. After this we had an informal discussion with the children and young people from the upper school.
- 5.2 The children told us that at the moment the pond area is never used during playtimes but sometimes in lessons. 15 children out of 20 thought that using the area during playtimes would be a good idea. Reasons for thinking playing in the pond area at playtimes is a bad idea included – 'cos could fall into the pond', 'stinging nettles', 'all the nature and animals would leave'
- 5.3 It was suggested that only one class at a time should use the pond area at lunch times as otherwise it would be 'too crowded'
- 5.4 Some children came up with ideas about how to stop children falling in the pond
 - 'fence around the pond'
 - 'just ask us not to go near the pond'
- 5.5 Some children thought that other improvements could be made to the site to make it easily to play in at playtimes
 - 'Cut grass back'
 - 'Cut back some stingers'
 - 'Cut grass'
 - 'More bug houses'

- 5.6 There was a debate with some of the older children as to whether a timetable for using the pond area was needed during playtimes.
- 6 children said that they would like to have a timetable
 - 2 children said that they would like to have no timetables
 - One child said that only 'one class at a time' should use the pond area as it 'was started as a wildlife area – would be a shame to lose all the wildlife'
- 5.7 The children also took part in a camera activity in the pond area where they were asked to take pictures of things they liked and things that they did not like, identifying these using a frame stating whether or not they like or do not like something. Because some of these pictures did not come out and from some it is unclear whether the children like or do not like something, the following results will not be quantifiable but still useful as an indication of what the children like and do not like in this area.
- 5.8 It is clear that the stinging nettles and brambles were not liked by the children and young people, with many children choosing to take photographs of these features.
- 5.9 The pond was clearly liked by the children and young people that took part, as was the wooden music station.
- 5.10 The wooden chair, the wall with the bird box on and the boxed in mud/compost where there have been vegetables planted in the past were also things that the children did not like about the area.

Extended School Play Consultation

In addition to the activities above, some of the children were also asked about activities they took part in before and after school. The children were then asked to tell us what they would really like to be able to do before and after school

- 6.1 What the children are currently doing before school
- Netball
 - P.E
 - Swimming
 - Hockey
 - Tennis 2
 - Cricket 2
 - Football 2
 - Breakfast Club 2
 - Schools Out 2
 - Watch TV
 - Taekwondo
 - Climb trees and play with friends
 - Cinema
 - Gym
 - Choir

Breakfast Club
Dash

6.2 What the children would like to be able to do before and after school

AM

Messy Club
Scrap
Tyres etc
Scrap and Mess
Art Lessons
Football
Climb Trees
Races

PM

Scrap
Swimming
Frisbee
Football
Climb trees
Trip to Park
Skipping

AM or PM

Horse riding
Messy Club
Dinner club
Hula Hooping
Jogging
'Build a room for the W.E'
Electronics
Building
Tea Club
Football Club
Painting Club

The Play Diaries

- 7.1 It is clear that the children and young people really enjoyed the variety of activities that were on offer at the play day. From their comments in the play diaries about the day, it is evident that the equipment provided allowed the children to play imaginatively and creatively and they had endless play value. Some children also suggested that this was done every day at the end of every week or term.
- 7.2 It is also evident that the time the children have with children from other year groups is extremely valuable

- 5MM 'enjoyed playing with 2SN and would like to play with other year groups.'

- 5LB said that they thought that playing with the year 2's was fun because 'they play in our games and we play in theirs' and 'because they like to join in and make up new games with us' and 'we meet lots of people in year 2'

- One young person who had attended the play sessions at Castle Neroche highlighted that he liked playing with the older children and young people.

- 7.3 When talking about what they did at playtime there are common themes across many of the year groups about what games and activities' take place. Some of the popular activities' include;
- 7.4 These activities are obviously all enjoyed by many children and young people.
- 7.5 It was also evident that the younger year groups engage in play that is more imaginative and creative and are also more likely to use props and additional equipment in their play. Nevertheless, it is clear that some year 5s do value this kind of imaginative play highlighting that they play 'horses', 'MI high' and 'Army'.
- 7.6 It was noticeable from the Play Diaries from both the year 6 groups were empty. With SATs and other work commitments the year teachers and classes in general would have been very busy this term. It is however important to ensure that the importance of valuable play experiences for this age group is recognized and that opportunities to reflect on these may also be valuable.
- 7.7 Creative activities such as drawing and wet play and making things with bricks etc feature in the children's play diaries. The photographs of 5LB having some fun with paint on the field after the play session illustrate the class using paint brushes as well as their hands and feet to create some beautiful art work. One child says ' playing with paint was so fun because we wouldn't usually do that in school'

General Recommendations

- 8.1 Sports continue to be popular during playtimes. Ensure that there is enough space and equipment to keep sports activities exciting and inclusive at playtimes. Perhaps introduce or extend 'different' sporting activities and physical games the children and young people can get involved in at playtimes, for example simple ideas such as tennis or bowling could easily be incorporated into playtimes if they are not already happening. Ideas that may require more thought and planning could include roller skating and trampolines.

- 8.2 Include loose parts in every playtime, both on the playground and on the field. Tarpaulins and den building, scrap for making things and junk – such as tyres etc would all be positive additions.
- 8.3 Requests for food and drink seemed popular, so if this is not already happening, perhaps allowing children to eat their lunch in a shady spot outside would be a good idea.
- 8.4 Children going in for lunch in their year groups, means that often children of different ages don't get to mix during playtime. It is evident that the children thoroughly enjoy it when they mix with other classes during lesson time (see quotes under the play diary section). Furthermore, it is clear that when given the opportunity to play with children and young people of different ages (during the whole school play session and at the outdoor sessions at Neroche) it worked really well, with older children and young people offering support and encouragement. This obviously benefits both the children supporting (learning key life skills) and also those being supported (often enabling them to push their play boundaries to new levels.)
- 8.5 Perhaps more props and equipment that has multiple play value would aid more imaginative play in older children and young people. It is clear from the play diaries that younger children regularly enjoy this kind of play type but older children seem to focus more heavily on play that involves being physically active such as sports and skipping or games such as 40 40, tag or hide and seek. It is important that all children, regardless of age are able to access a range of 'play types' during their play time at Manor Court, including play that involves imagination and role play. Bob Hughes' Taxonomy of Play Types is useful here as he devised 16 different play types that he feels settings should be ensuring all children can access if they wish. These can be found at the following link;
<http://www.playassociationhf.org.uk/wesbitedocs/summary%20of%20play%20types.pdf>
- 8.6 Consider adding some more stimuli for creative activities at playtimes. For example, having pens, pencils and even paints and play dough available for all ages to use.
- 8.7 When talking to a parent about play at the school, it was evident that despite speaking positivity about the schools positive attitude and response to meeting the needs of children with disability and impairment as well as the way children play inclusively at the school, the physical aspects of the play space may pose some problems with for some children with disability and impairment in terms of accessibility, due to the sloping playground. This should be an area to consider investigating further.

The Field

- 8.8 Most children would like to access the field every lunchtime and breaktime. So any improvements on the amount of play times spent on the field would be beneficial.

- 8.9 Improve how the field is used. Fixed equipment was a popular suggestion here. Perhaps to keep costs low a rope or tyre swing from a strong/healthy tree in the field could be erected?
- 8.10 Children did come up with ideas for shade. Perhaps Manor Court could combine the need for shade with another popular suggestion, dens/hideouts. This way children can seek shade if they are hot but it can also be used to aid imaginative games and activities too.
- 8.11 Loose parts such as sports equipment or scrap could be brought up to the field during lunch and break for children to use.

Nature Area

- 8.12 Children were mostly concerned about safety in the nature area if it was open access during playtimes. Improvements could be made to ensure that children felt safe to play in this area. For example perhaps cover or fence the pond itself rather than the whole area making the area more accessible but no less safe.
- 8.13 Perhaps spend some time and money clearing away the nettles and clearing some of the long grass to improve access to different parts of the area.
- 8.14 Children were concerned about this area having too many children in it at once. As with other activities at lunch times at the school it was suggested by some children that a rota would deal with this problem.

Extended School Activities

- 8.15 It is clear that currently, many of the activities the children are involved in at school before and after school are sports based. As the consultation processes has found sporting activities are very popular with many children and young people. However, if there is the capacity to add another 'before and after school session', consider having sessions where children can get involved in different activities such as messy play, arts and crafts as well as playing with junk and climbing trees etc.

Targeted Consultations

- 9.1 We worked with approximately 12 children and young people from across the year groups at the school. These children were identified by staff at the school for different reasons including finding lunchtimes and break times at the school particularly difficult. We worked with this group for an afternoon to gather their ideas about potential problem areas when they play and also ideas for making playtimes better for them. We used various activities to gather their ideas.

Models

10.1 The children had access to a range of natural materials such as wood, leaves, clay and water as well as a small amount of scrap such as straws, paper plates, containers and string. They were asked to make a model of something they would like to see in their playground. This could be a piece of fixed or loose equipment or just a model of a certain area that they would like to see developed in some way. What follows are the children's ideas following this task.

Treehouse	4 children
Water (swimming pool)	3 children
Trees and flowers – to look 'beautiful' or to 'smell nice'	3 children
Equipment (swings and a pole)	2 children
Fire	2 children
Sport - football	1 children

The children's models in more detail

- ❖ Treehouse. Play inside with friends. Flowers that smell nice
- ❖ Treehouse with a ladder. Play with friends-
- ❖ Base in a tree. Climb up pole and slide through
- ❖ Tree with a pool at the bottom
- ❖ Swimming pool to go in
- ❖ Swimming pool
- ❖ Fire – like London on fire
- ❖ Walk up the wood and swing into the leaves underneath
- ❖ Tree – beautiful – not to play under it. I'd have a slug in it. Its a slugs house with worms and snails
- ❖ Swimming pool, edges – decoration. The leave is a diving board for swimming at playtimes and lunchtimes
- ❖ Field with a pit of fire. Light fire at lunchtimes up on the field to warm ourselves up. Cook toast. Hang things over the fire.
- ❖ Goalposts for playing football in the field, no nets just posts.

Tree of questions

- 11.1 There were 8 large, painted trees on pieces of card which had 5 branches. At the top of each tree was a question and on each branch was a response to that question.
- 11.2 The children were given 8 stickers each and we went through each of the trees in turn. Each child stuck their sticker on a response that they agreed with. What follows are the results of this activity.
- 11.3 Some children responded in negative ways about some areas of play at the school

- The most problematic was access to challenging and adventurous play opportunities. 6 children felt that this was a problem
- 6 children felt that there was bullying in the playground
- 5 children felt that adults do not listen to the views and opinions of children and young people in the school.
- 3 children strongly felt that children and young people in the school are unable to initiate their own games
- 2 children did not feel happy and confident to play outdoors at school.
- 1 child felt that all children were unable to play together at lunch and break times

11.4 Some children responded positively about play at the school

- All 12 children thought that children and young people at the school are physically active and play outdoors
- 10 children felt that people at the school knew how important it is to play outside
- 9 children felt that all children play together at lunch and break times
- 8 children felt happy and confident to play outside at Manor Court
- 6 children felt that children and young people's views were listened to at the school
- 5 children felt that they could play in challenging and adventurous ways
- 3 children felt that the school playground was a bully-free zone

Camera Exercise

12.1 The children and young people got themselves into small groups and were given a camera and some card to create frames out of. These frames could say things like – I do not like, I like, this worries me and so on. The children were then asked to take photographs of different areas of the playground and field that they liked and did not like etc.

12.2 After this activity, we asked the children to share with the group, one thing they photographed that they liked and one thing they photographed that they did not like.

I Like	I Do not like
Running track on field	Trim trail on Junior playground, the bit with red ropes
Large trim trail	Flower beds, infant playground, because they are scary
Nothing	Trim trail in junior playground. The rope tunnel hurts my knees
Running track on field	Monkey bars and tunnel on the senior playground. It hurts my back
Trees in field and daisies	Ditch in field, because it is mucky
Daisies	Nothing, like everything
Shelter, don't have one in our	Brambles by trim trail in the junior playground

playground	
Flowers on field	First part of trim trail in junior playground
House in junior playground because I like sitting in with friends	Snakes and ladders in junior playground, don't like that game
Skipping ropes, shelter/house junior playground	
Seats in pond area	Danger pond sign, in wrong place and should say 'danger pond near up ahead' Should be on foundation fence with an arrow
Turtle in pond area	Rope on trim trail in the junior playground

12.3 Other photographs of things the children do not like or worried them included;

I do not like litter

I do not like stinging nettles

These areas were identified as areas that were not liked

12.4 Other photographs of features the children did like included;

I like the field

There was a photograph of the Senior Trim Trail area. In the picture there was a child playing with a hula hoop.

There was another 'I like' photograph taken of the older children's trim trail.

I like the wooden box in the pond area

There was a photograph of the reception children's grassy area which is fenced off from the rest of the school playground. In the picture there were children playing on the grass with a teacher.

I like the pond area

I like the ditch

I like the trim trail (senior playground)

12.5 It is clear that the child have lots of issues with both the junior and senior trim trails. It was unclear whether children and young people were consulted before this fixed equipment was put in. Children should be consulted before any equipment is put in as there are clearly problems for this group with the fixed equipment that is currently available. The biggest issue is with the trim trial in the junior playground. It is important to note though that some children did identify the trim trails as something that they liked about the playground space too.

12.6 There are features that the children like in the nature area. However, at present they are not able to access these features as the gates to the nature garden are locked during playtimes.

12.7 The 'house' or shelter in the infant play area were popular but one child commented that they do not have one in their playground.

- 12.8 Three children suggested that they liked features on the field such the running track, trees and daisies. Again, they are obviously not always able to access these features that they like as the field is not always available at playtime.

Recommendations

- 13.1 Adding a treehouse or more shelters would be a popular addition for this group of children and young people
- 13.2 Swimming pools were popular in the model exercise. Consider bringing in water play during lunchtimes and breaktimes
- 13.3 Nature and the pond area seemed important to the children and young people. Consider opening up the pond area to allow children to experience this area during their playtimes. Also consider opening the field area to all the children every playtime to offer another way of accessing natural elements.
- 13.4 Ensure that children's ideas about their playtime and playspace are listened to and acted upon before any additional fixed or loose equipment is added.
- 13.5 Many children felt that access to challenging and adventurous play opportunities was a problem. Offering more exciting and risky play opportunities' may make playtime more enjoyable.
- 13.6 Bullying is still a problem for many at playtimes – perhaps offering the children more to do at playtimes may keep children occupied and therefore reduce problems with bullying.
- 13.7 There were many positive comments about playtimes at Manor Court (see 3.4 above). This includes the fact that all 12 children in this group felt that they are able to be physically active and play outdoors at the school.
- 13.8 Consider doing some more consultation work with this group about areas in the playground that concern them and why.

Problems with the process

- 13.1 Results have been collated from the ideas and thoughts we received for the children and young people. Where possible children were asked to explain their ideas so that our write up would be accurate. However sometimes features or suggestions written/drawn on the graffiti board or the cardboard box of ideas etc may have been omitted from the report if the writing or picture is not legible. Furthermore, many of the photographs from the camera activities have been omitted because it is unclear from the photograph whether the child likes or dislikes the feature they have taken a photograph of.
- 13.2 Although some of the results have been quantified, it should be noted that because the children and young people took charge of the activities and group work some ideas that each group came up with may have been noted

down more than once. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this was taken into consideration when recording the children's ideas from each group.

Manor Court – Outdoor Play sessions

I Introduction

- 1.1 8 Children and young people from across the school year groups took part in the 6 week outdoor play sessions. The sessions took place at Castle Neroche, which is about a 10 minute drive from the school.
- 1.2 It was evident from the first session that many of the children who attended were not used to playing in this sort of environment.
- 1.3 We were at the forest for about an hour and a half each session.
- 1.4 The sessions were child led and a small amount of equipment was taken each week as a response to requests from the group the week before. Each week we moved to a different spot in the forest, which the children also picked.

2 Outdoor session’s activities

- 2.1 What follows is a list of some of the activities and play that the children engaged in whilst at the forest.

Den Building – on their own or with a friend	Hammocks made from netting between two trees
Rope Swing	Making beads and jewellery
Climbing trees	Drawing
Climbing on fallen down trees	Playing in the muddy stream
Natural art – collecting items for pictures, bark rubbings.	Mud pies
Giant art attack	Pretend play – batman and robin
Going on adventures/ exploring	Making Slug houses

- 2.2 Each week the children were asked to pick the best part of the session and also asked what they would like to do next week. Some of the children wrote their ideas and best experiences on leaves provided.
- 2.3 It was clear that rope swings in trees were very popular. The swings created were different every week. Staff often helped create the swings as they were often suspended from high branches making the swings more exciting to ride!
- 2.4 Sliding and climbing on natural banks and slopes was also another very popular activity.
- 2.5 ‘Going off on adventures’ was also very popular with some children and young people.
- 2.6 Some of the children really enjoyed doing natural art and other creative activities. I felt that it was important to always have a mix of equipment that enabled children to play in a physical way with the natural environment as well as equipment that could be used for more creative and less physical play.

3 Case studies from the outdoor play sessions

- 3.1 As the sessions progressed it was clear that some children made real developments in terms of their ability to play either on their own or with friends.

Child A

- 3.2 At the beginning of the sessions Child A wasn't confident to do things by herself and often requested adult support when climbing up and down banks. At the first session some of older children had been going up and down the slope on their own, unaided. These older children also erected a rope between two trees so that they could use it to climb down the slope more easily. Child A took awhile to build up the confidence to do this. We supported her and encouraged her to do this alone rather than helping her down. Eventually she went down on her bottom and continued to do this for most of the session. At the last session she was slowly walking down a muddy slope behind me and said. 'When I come up here with my dad he always carries me down this bit'. I suggested to Child A that next time she can show her dad that she can do it on her own. The last two sessions I watched Child A go off on her own (within site of adult project workers and LSA) to explore. This included walking down a ditch which had fallen down trees in it. She climbed down a fairly steep bank and then climbed up the other side only to slide down the mossy verge the other side which was, in comparison to the slope experience the first week, quite steep. Child A told us that this was her favorite part of the sessions

Child B

- 3.3 At the beginning of the sessions it was not clear whether Child B was enjoying her time in the forest. She was very quiet and was cautious in her play. During the first session Child B watched the other children going up and down a slope. She was unsure whether to join in. We tried to encourage her, making suggestions about how she could get herself down the slope (going on her bottom, using a rope), but Child B was still not sure. We left Child B to contemplate this for quite some time. Eventually she did join the children in sliding down the slope after assessing the activity for sometime and watching others enjoy this play. Mrs Trott also spoke positively about the impact of the sessions on Child B and how she looked forward to coming. Child B's mother also said that at first she was unsure about the sessions but in the end she 'loved it' and it really 'built her confidence up'. Her mother also said that Child B's confidence has even improved a little outside the sessions too.

Child C

- 3.4 Throughout the sessions it was clear that Child C wanted adventure. At first Child C wanted to jump straight in and follow the older children. This resulted in him bumping his head after taking a tumble at the first session. During the second session he spent most of his time going backwards and forwards on a fallen down tree. At first he had help from Mrs Trott, but

eventually he was encouraged to do this for himself and spent the session going up and down the tree stump. Sometimes he would trip up or fall, but was always happy to continue and wanted to get straight back on the tree. He also played imaginatively – pretending to be Batman and Robin. Child C often wanted to go off with 2 older members of the group. The older children responded positively to this and often supported Child C to join them on adventures where they would go off with one of the project workers and explore the forest. For example one of the older children supported Child C to climb down a steep verge using a rope, to ensure that Child C was able to get down. At one point Child C wanted to climb back up the bank after scratching his hand. Both of the older children aided Child C to get back up the bank. Through encouraging words and supportive actions the older children were generally very helpful in ensuring that Child C got the most from his forest experience. I feel that Child C left the sessions more confident in his ability to play without adult support as he was able to gain support through his peers. This relationship was very positive. Child C's mother suggested the Child C 'enjoyed it immensely'. In her opinion she felt that children should be given more opportunities to play in this way and 'need the freedom to get messy', suggesting that children are kept indoors too much.

4 General comments/ observations

4.1 At first, many of the children were worried about getting dirty, especially their hands and their clothes. Once we had said to the children that this was OK, most children were happy to play and get dirty and messy without worrying about this.

4.2 Comments for the children and young people

'I loved it at the forest with Miss Trott and all of the other people at the forest, we get to do what we like as well as things that we are not allowed to do...(we) ran down really steep and deep ditches but we are allowed to do everything, so today it was very very fun'

'This is great' – comment from child whilst at his first session

I had a go on the swing then I jumped off as far as I can. We also made a den. Next I made a hammock with Mrs Trott. I lay in the Hammock.'

When it was time to go back to school Child D said 'I don't want to go back'. She then went and hid up a tree.

I went to the forest there are foxgloves which are poisonous plants. We slid on our bottoms down the steep slide and ran up and down the slide to. We built rope swings and made cards too.

'Yesterday I went to the forest (with two older young people), I built a den on my own and I went on a swing and I fell off. I bounced on the tree and tried to get off, jumped off and landed on my shoulder. It was fun.'

5 Effectiveness Strategy Results

- 5.1 As part of Barnardo's recording protocol we have a questionnaire (see Appendix A) which we asked teachers, the children and their parents to complete. This questionnaire is used at the start of the project and then again at the end to see if there has been any change.
- 5.2 Using this questionnaire for this pilot has not been entirely successful. Unfortunately, for baseline questionnaires we were only able to use results from parents and children, as the teachers questionnaires were not completed fully as they did not have the name of the child they were referring to on them so it was impossible to relate these to each child attending the session.
- 5.3 The follow up questionnaire was also only completed by the children and the parents, as the teachers were not able to complete this at the end of term due to busy schedules. Furthermore, 4 children out of the 8 either did not want to complete the questionnaire, or we could not get hold of them via the telephone after the project so for some children we only had questionnaire results from parents. Where possible, project workers added their opinion to the results.
- 5.4 From appendix A you can see that children, parents and staff are asked 10 questions – each question relating to potential outcome from the sessions. The following chart shows an overview of the results.

Outcomes that improved	Outcomes No Change	Outcomes Got Worse
30	28	22

- 5.5 In terms of things that got worse these mostly related to areas outside the scope of the outdoor play sessions for example 'access to an use of inclusive resources in the community (including the school)
- 5.6 Another example of an outcome that appeared to get slightly worse was - 'Build community capacity to meet children's needs' – which relates to the question asked to stakeholders 'do you think adults know how important it is for children to play outdoors and adults listening and acting upon their views and opinions were the most problematic here.
- 5.7 Reasons for these results could relate to a number of factors. It is possible that when asked initially parents and children didn't feel they had a lack of outdoor play opportunities. The experience of taking part in the pilot may have highlighted to them that they would like more experiences of this type. What didn't seem a problem before became more of a problem via exposure to this new and positive experience.
- 5.8 It could be that the children and parents were not reminded of the results that had previously answered and therefore may not remember what they had said before. Furthermore, the children that were involved in the play sessions had not been in the consultation regarding the schools play spaces,

therefore, children may not have felt that they were given the opportunity to share their views this as other children were, despite project workers ensuring that the children were asked about how they wanted the session to run and with what equipment.

- 5.9 In terms of the outcomes that had improved it is reasonable to conclude that these outcomes lay more clearly within the scope of achievement of the outdoor play sessions. The biggest improvements were in the following areas; increasing children's confidence, increasing the chances children and young people have had for development through new experiences and adventurous ways and also adults promoting children's play and learning.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 It was clear that all of the young people that took part in the outdoor sessions had positive experiences in the forest, on their own, with a friend, trying something new, having adventures or just simply being away from the school environment. Other children and young people at the school should also be able to take part in some kind of free play experience outside of the school grounds. If the school could facilitate taking other groups out on similar sessions this would definitely be a positive step towards offering more varied and adventurous play for the children and young people at the school.
- 6.2 The group worked well with the mixed ages, with children pushing themselves to keep up with older children and also older children taking some responsibility in their play to support others. However it would be good if this mixing of year groups could be mirrored at play times, as the experiences the group had with other children from different year groups could not be taken back into the play ground as many of them were separated during school play times.
- 6.3 It was clear that the children enjoyed the freedom and flexibility that the sessions offered. For many it took a while to get used to not being told what to do by adults and instead making their own decisions about their play. All of the children and young people seemed to enjoy this child led way of working. The natural environment that we played in was also very inspiring as there were lots of natural features to play with. The school should try and ensure children can access such environments or develop the school site to ensure that natural features are brought into play experiences. For example the natural slopes and banks were really enjoyed. The school has a fantastic ditch in the field which the children are not allowed to play in during playtimes. Before the sessions while we waited for the bus, Mrs Trott and the project workers allowed the children to play in the ditch (as they were supervised by 3 adults) and the children seemed to really enjoy this.

Parents that I spoke with were positive about the sessions. Can more be done to ensure that children can continue to experience this type of play, for free, outside of school as well as in school time? As mentioned as a result of the consultations, the school could consider doing an after school free play club that encourages challenging and adventurous free play on the school grounds, perhaps using the field

as the natural setting. Ropes, nets, tyres and tarpaulins' etc could be left out for the children to use in whatever way they choose.

Notes from final meeting with Manor Court

On school play day.

- School felt that 50 minute play sessions were enough for the little ones but the older ones could have had longer.
- However, some children may have settled down and got one with their play more effectively if they had longer to calm down.
- Needed more messy resources because so popular.

On outdoor Play sessions.

- Having a mixed age group was felt to be very beneficial.
- The school sent out a questionnaire to all parents before this started to get parents views on who should attend – surprisingly high number of forms returned can perhaps be seen as evidence of parents enthusiasm for this kind of approach. FM may be able to pull some data from this.
- Fiona has pulled together an activity sheet of play ideas for children to use at home – Barnardo's happy to input if required. This is a very good example of how the school are proactively trying to find new solutions to promote play.
- Everyone felt the wording on the outcomes questionnaires for children was too difficult.

On training.

- School felt the training with lunchtime staff needed to be done with the whole school

On consultation work

- School would have liked feedback from the findings of the consultation work sooner if this was possible.
- School would like to share findings from consultation with play buddies.

Consultation findings

- Top 6 issues (in no particular order)
 1. More access to playful loose parts
 2. Access to food and drink
 3. Access to the top field (incl equipment and shade)
 4. Making nature area more child friendly
 5. More playful opportunities before and after school
 6. More access to sports equipment etc

- KL felt she needed more time to do the consultation with the targeted group but the two most popular alterations to the playground that the group wanted to see were;

1. Tree houses
2. Water play

General

- Play Diaries were very successful and have documented some great feedback from children and staff – should be continued.
- Mixed play sessions have been introduced and been very popular. Sometimes the older ones do take over but the school feels this just shows their need to play.
- School has already made much more of the usage of the field at lunchtimes and this is also promoting more mixed play.
- Younger children are now using the trim trail and the grass area around it – dancing has been very popular.
- School has had a lot of positive feedback from parents – MH asked Liz to try and capture some of this.
- School has noticed increased use of the phrase ‘playtime’ as opposed to ‘break time’ and Abbie felt she had had a lot more positive feedback about enjoyment of playtime.
- Dressing up has been very popular.

On how to use HS+ budget.

- The school enjoyed the outdoor play sessions but felt cautious re amount of supervision required. The knock on of staff leaving school to go to outdoor play sessions would probably make them prohibitively expensive and have a negative knock on effect on teaching in the school because of increased amount of cover staff. It might be possible to use a parent volunteer?
- School’s preference is to use the budget to achieve a series of quick win’s to promote more play in the school. i.e. alterations to nature area.
- School would also like to hold a playdays every term.
- School has 2 inset days in September and will look at next steps.

Audit Score Sheet & Action Plan, Manor Court

4 = Excellent. 3 = Good, Improvements possible. 2 = Emerging, Improvements desirable. 1 = Underdeveloped, improvements needed.

Scores and comments in Black from April 2009. Scores and comments in brackets and bold from final meeting July 2009.

Leadership and Planning (max score 12)	Score	Comments
Champions and Leaders	1 (2)	This role did not exist at the commencement of the project. (Liz and Fiona have worked very hard with the steering group to champion this work. A single appointed play champion or play lead now needs to be selected.)
Policy and Planning	2 (3)	No current play policy but play incorporated in school planning (School has produced an excellent play policy which has been agreed by Governors. Next steps if for this to be communicated to all stakeholders and link strategically to the school development plan.)
Risky Play	1 (2)	No current policy (see above – policy in place which will allow progress in this area. School still cautious re levels of supervision of pupils.)
Participation	2 (3)	Some good examples of consultation work and modifications to playtimes. (Manor Court appears from this pilot to be a very responsive school to the ideas of the children – it has welcomed the feedback that has come out of the pilot and moved quickly to develop new play opportunities – next steps are to maximise the usage of £2k budget to make alterations. Continued use of play diaries will inform further change.)
Total	6 (10)	

Access (max score 16)	Score	Comments
Accessibility, impairments	2 (2)	No current issues (unchanged – the school may want to look in to specific issues in the future.)
All weather and seasonal access	2 (3)	All agreed that there is plenty of potential to improve in this area. (Increase use of the playfield field is a good example of progress here – this can increase further with some of the modifications suggested by consultation and urgent work needs to be done to open up the nature area.)
Playful use of indoor space	1 (1)	Children have lots of options but no free play indoors unchanged
Extended Access	2 (2)	Good examples of extended activity but very limited play options. (no change yet but has been discussed – next step would be for school to offer free play / loose part opportunities for children before and after school with only arms length supervision.)
TOTAL	7 (8)	

Play value (max score 40)	Score	Comments
Inclusion	1 (2)	This will be a key area taken forward by the play pilot. (The school is clearly keen to develop the inclusiveness of its play offer and there were major achievements in this area from both the targeted sessions. Further work to progress the findings from the targeted consultation would help.)
Play needs of different ages	2 (3)	School keen on this approach and good examples given (Good examples of ideas to increase mixed age play and evidence that this is having positive outcomes.)
Movement	2 (3)	Good availability of options that promote movement in play (Manor Court has always had a lot of

		space and is now utilising it more effectively to promote movement i.e. increased use of field and trim trail.)
Imaginative play	2 (3)	The school already promotes some opportunities for imaginative play but would like to do more. (the school has really embraced the need to develop work in this area, purchasing its own play pod (not yet up and running) and encouraging activities like fancy dress etc.)
Ball games	3 (3)	Good systems that work (unchanged)
Loose parts (fabricated)	2 (3)	Some examples (see comments above ‘imaginative play’)
Loose parts (natural)	1 (1)	Very limited opportunity currently (No change yet, but potential to do so much on top field and in nature area this could be a major area of development for the school’s play offer.)
Access to the natural environment	1 (2)	Limited opportunities currently (Outdoor play sessions have been very successful and hugely valued by children and staff. School considering some long term plans to develop outdoor play space for regular sessions on the top field.)
Places for children to sit	2 (2)	Good options (no change)
TOTAL	16 (22)	

Care and maintenance (max score 12)	Score	Comments
Well maintained	3 (3)	Good systems supportive caretaker (unchanged)
TOTAL	3 (3)	

Staffing (max score 12)	Score	Comments
Appropriate staff training	1 (2)	No staff have playwork training (Still an area for improvement. Training for lunchtime supervisors was successful and pilot has raised awareness. Risk

		Management training outstanding.)
Supervision role	2 (2)	Effective supervision rota's (unchanged – some concern from Barnardo's staff that high levels of supervision can mitigate against free play sometimes – this may alter once school has had more training re risk and the new play policy has been embedded.)
Supervision practices	2 (2)	training/encouragement needed re free play (School needs to be given some time during next term to bed in new working practices to enforce play policy.)
TOTAL	5 (6)	

Behaviour	Score	Comments
Reduction in playtime disputes	2 (2)	School has worked here and made considerable recent progress (it is not clear if there is any evidence of this and this is probably an area that needs to be reviewed in a few months time – there has been positive feedback that children are enjoying play times (as opposed to break times) more.)
Increase self confidence	2 (3)	School has done good work here and keen to progress further with pilot (The outdoor play sessions have really demonstrated strong positive outcomes in this area for some children and the school is keen to build in this work – these kind of play opportunities need to be sustained in other ways if school chooses not to repeat regular outdoor play sessions.)
TOTAL	4 (5)	

Concluding comments. The score sheet above testifies that across the school Manor Court have sought to positively use this pilot project to support the development of children's play in most aspects of school life. From April to July 2009 their score has risen from 41 to 54. They have moved from a low base with many scores of 1 or 2, to predominantly scores of 2 and 3. This reflects the fact that there are examples of good practice developing in the school and many agreed improvements that the school wants to implement over the next year. The key actions are outlined above and in the final project report. In order to achieve the Healthy Schools + status it would be expected that these scores have further increased by the final assessment in March/April 2010.

Final Report. Burnham Infants. By Helen Marlborough

Whole school consultation May 20th 2009

We held a mini play day for the whole school so we were able to observe the children's play and have the opportunity to consult with the whole school.

Due to the limitations of outdoor space at Burnham Infants we decided to open the reception play ground and educational area. For the play morning all children of all ages could use all three play spaces as one. We had the following activities;

- Messy play – Flour, sand, bark, soil, water and pasta.
- Bits and bobs – Cardboard boxes, large and small, containers, cardboard tubes, thin plastic sheets, cotton sheets.
- Fancy dress
- Play ranger / Sports – Tyres, ropes, nets, hula hoops, bean bags, skipping ropes, and foam dice.
- Den building – tarpaulin sheets and bamboo canes.

The children had two hours free play with all the above equipment and the following observations were made;

- They loved messy play, nearly all gone within the first 30 minutes
- Cardboard boxes very popular, made trains and houses out of them and played armies
- Used ropes for tug of war, very popular
- Tied each other up and pulled each other around with the ropes
- Lots of running around
- All children played together, mixed ages, no zones, worked really well
- 3 girls worked together to help each other on the peddle push
- Used the nets and ropes on the existing play equipment to make new play ideas
- Lots of den building
- Two children spent most of the time colouring, a teacher commented and said they always colour in at break time, they are a little worried of the unknown
- Tug of war between two boys, good way of relieving tension as they spend a lot of time fighting at break time
- Used trees and ropes to make new games and worked together
- Made musical instruments from cardboard tubes
- Lots of chase
- Boy interviewed me using a cardboard cone for a microphone “what do you like about flowers?”
- Getting inside tyres and rolling around the playground
- Lots of imagination and team work with the den building

- Jumping in muddy puddles “I love jumping in muddy puddles, splash splash splash”
- “I like playing with the mucky stuff”
- “Messy play is my favourite”
- Game involving a cowgirl arresting people and taking them to jail (fancy dress and boxes)
- Game with hula hoops (type of assault course)
- Timber trail NOT used a lot
- Digging in the mud under the trees
- Football still played (children managed to find balls from somewhere!!!)
- Cardboard boxes put on heads
- Limbo game
- Decorating cardboard boxes
- ‘Boy trap’ (children being caught in a net and tied up)
- Children walking bare foot
- Made a box into a police station with cowboys
- “The big boxes are my favourite”
- “Everything is my favourite”
- “We like Lego”
- Children still playing with the mud at the end of the session (after having over two hours to play with it)
- Some children VERY muddy, one girl completely covered!
- Created a mudslide/muddy puddle
- Pushing each other in boxes
- Children played with sticks and played sword fights
- One child fell over, teachers observed as she got up and carried on playing that she would usually have started crying
- Drums with plastic containers
- Found a large stick and brought into playground and used as part of play
- Girls “We love messy play”
- Played on wooden balancing beams, the children enjoyed playing on them as normally at lunch time they do not get chance to play on them as everyone is on them
- Sitting in plastic trugs and pulling each other around (good exercise)
- A group of boys used the boxes to hide in and play army wars
- Jumping and sliding in pools of muddy water
- Lots of different uses for boxes
- Collecting natural materials and making crafts with leaves, mud, twigs and flowers in the educational area
- In wild area collected buttercups and purple flowers. Lots of small and large sticks to build structures
- Playing with hula hoops over the shed, using existing structures. Also running in and around hedges, children said they are “fun”

The morning started off feeling tense and the children were very loud through excitement. The staff were very supportive of the play morning but commented saying they found it hard not to intervene. As the morning went on the noise level

naturally lowered, the children still ran around and used lots of energy but became more relaxed and focused on particular activities and games, the teachers also felt more relaxed and appreciated the positives the equipment was bringing to the children and their play and the importance of not intervening. They also felt they were not required to intervene as much as usual.

At the end of the two hours the whole school sat on the playground and we asked the children to put their hands up and tell us the following;

“What did you like about today and what would you like to have at play time?”

- Mud and balls
- Mud x 8
- Hula Hoops x 6
- Foam dices x 4
- Ropes x 11
- Dressing up x 5
- Tyres x 10
- Climbing trees x lots of children
- Cardboard boxes x 9
- Playing in the environmental area and making a bonfire (pretend)

We also asked what they did not like

- Mud x 2
- Throwing stones x 1

Comments and observations made by the children about the play day

...Why can't we go in the park next door? I go there with my mum
...oh God, I need to wash my hands!
...we are all making mud pies, Yuk!
...I got bored of that messy stuff so I went on here.
...I am trying to clean my hands on grass this is not normal.
...normally you can't go on the play apparatus so I am going on it now.
...(on tug of war) even if there is 18 on the other side I keep winning!
...we are making a people trap to catch everyone.
...I've got tummy ache cos of all of this!
...we tried to make a sandcastle to the sky.
...hey – I'm good at knots and everything.
...when you put the mud flour on it automatically cooks. Make a little cherry for on top.
...This pie is yummy. I have been busy. You can have it for your birthday?
...look, I've got these pine cones...can I keep them?
...this is my den. I built it. Its mine but you can come in if you want.
...I'm the king. Come on lets go back to my castle.
...I found 2 spiders and 2 frogs.
...me and Poppy have made magic wands. I am turning you into a princess (with moss on the end of a stick)

...we are factory persons making chocolate (mixing mud with sticks)
(2 children making leaf plates with wild flowers poked through) ... we are going to put them on the walls and decorate the school.
2 children making clay angels with leafs, halos, and clay mud.
...well that's a place I've never been! (Whilst leaving the educational area)
...I putted lots of water in a bowl, mixed it with mud and it's a mud pie!
...I tied the rope to the gate to make a trap.
...we made a boat of the bridge and tied Leon up as a prisoner.
...I have made three new friends today, James, Aron and Fynn.

Consultation with Target group in school

May 20th 2009 – First Session

In the afternoon we spent 2 hours with 9 children. The group was made up of mixed ages from reception to year 2. The children had been selected for various reasons such as some of the following; low confidence, did not enjoy play time, found it hard to mix with other children, not physically active, did not like to play outside.

Excluding the messy play we kept out the equipment from the play morning and observed the children play for the first half. We observed the following;

Played individually to start with, at first they only played with equipment familiar to them (hula hoops) and their play was very timid.

As the play session continued and with reassurance from the project workers that they could play with all the equipment there was an increase in their imaginative play and the children began to help each other and play together building and making things. Two boys made a giant person on the playground from all the materials such as tyres, plastic cones and ropes.

The children also played a lot with the peddle push and helped each other not to fall off, but when they did they got back up and persevered.

The hula hoops were very popular with the girls and the ropes were popular with all but more so with the boys, their play was much more imaginative and physical. The two boys from reception class played tug of war, made a racing car from hula hoops and spent most of the play session running around. The children also enjoyed climbing the trees in the educational area.

We then sat down in the educational area and asked the children the following questions;

“What do you think would make your play time better?”

- We really enjoyed playing in the trees, we're never allowed at play time, and would like to play in them all the time.
- The children from reception class said they liked playing in the big playground as “we have lots of room to run around in”
- I love coming in the environmental area at play time, it is really fun x 3

- I would like to look and see what is in the pond
- I liked making a person out of the materials

“Would you like to play outside when it rains?”

- Have to go under the shelter at the moment
- Would like to play in the rain but only with coats and boots on, not fun if they don't have wellies
- I would splash in puddles
- I wish we could always play outside, I would not want to wear a coat though
- “I would like to go outside when it rains; we can play in it then catch it in the air and drink it when it rains”

“When you play indoors what do you play with?”

- Do work
- Play with toys
- Paint or play with play dough
- Play with clay
- Play with Lego

7 of the children said they like playing with all of the above indoors, 2 boys said they would like to play outside all the time.

To finish the session we asked the children to draw a picture of what they would like to see in their play time, they drew the following;

- The peddle push with a friend helping
- Imaginative play, making a person
- Playing with friends running around
- Playing in big play ground
- Tyres and ropes
- A race track – running around with a friend
- Splashing in puddles
- Playing with goo (messy play) x 2

July 21st 2009 – Second session

At the end of term we re visited the target group, due to one children being on holiday we had 8 children.

We began the session reminding the children who we were and started with asking the following;

What do you like about playtime?

- Playing football
- Invisible racing cars

- Playing batman
- Playing Lego inside
- Playing the computer inside
- Watching a video inside
- Playing snakes and ladders at the table
- Choosing time (they can choose what to play inside)
- Playing schools
- I like it when it is snowing

What don't you like about play time?

- When I am lonely
- When it is raining

Compared to the first time we met with the children most of the children's answers in regards to play time related to sitting down indoors.

We then asked the children;

What did you like on the play day?

- Climbing trees
- Making people
- Eating our fruit outside
- Hula hoops
- Running around
- Skipping ropes
- Making things
- Going in and hiding in the bushes
- Ropes and tyres
- Want all of it at play time

Even with a 9 week gap between meetings with the children they could still remember what they liked about the day and would like it at play time.

The next exercise involved the project workers reading out some questions and the children running to either "Yes" "No" or "Not Sure" please see below;

Question	Yes	No	Not Sure
Would you like to climb trees at play time? (because we are told it is dangerous)	4	4	0
Would you like to play in the educational area at play time? (some did not know what it was)	4	0	4
Would you like pop you tents at play time?	5	1	2

Would you like some old car tyres in the playground to roll around in, crawl through do what you want with? (some no's because they could not fit inside it on the play day)	1	4	3
Would you like fancy dress at play time?	5	1	2
Would you like to play in the playing field at play time?	8	0	0
Would you mind if dogs were in the play field when you are playing?	4	2	2
Would you like to build dens at play time?	5	1	2
Would you like skipping ropes and hula hoops at play time?	4	1	3
Would you like to play a giant game of tug or war?	2	0	6
Would you like musical instruments to play with at play time?	4	1	3
Would you like a box of large pieces of material for dressing up, making tents and playing with?	5	2	1
Would you like large pieces of cardboard and colouring crayons out at play time?	5	1	2
Would you like to play on the climbing frames all the time, even when it is wet? (we are told it is dangerous)	2	2	4
Would you like to play outside when it is raining?	2	3	3
Would you like to play outside when it is raining if you have waterproof coats and wellies on? (I no said he would like to still play outside but with no coat and wellies on)	4	1	3
Would you like to jump in puddles?	6	1	1

Picture exercise

For the last activity we gave the children two pieces of paper, one with “Rain” on it and one with “Sun” We asked the children to draw a picture of them playing in each weather condition and they showed the following.

Sun – Playing on the timber trail
 Sun – Playing football
 Sun – Playing with friends on a skipping rope
 Sun – Going outside playing cars
 Sun – Headstands
 coat
 Sun – Imagining being in the sun
 Sun – Playing Lego
 Sun – Handstands

Rain – Jumping in puddles outside
 Rain – Jumping in puddles
 Rain – Splashing in puddles
 Rain – Jumping in muddy puddles
 Rain – Wearing a waterproof
 Rain – Playing being a car
 Rain – Playing Lego
 Rain – Playing in the play ground

No matter the weather all eight children's pictures were of them playing outside. Even the boy that said "Playing Lego" for both sun and rain had drawn it in the playground.

Sand dunes – Outdoor Play target group

The chosen location for the outdoors session was Berrow Beach and Nature Reserve which is made up of sand dunes, nature and wildlife. We felt this was an appropriate location for free, natural, challenging and risky play.

Each session was held from 9.30am – 11.15am and we would take a 5 minute walk down to the beach and then the children could decide where they wanted to play and what they would like to do.

First play session – Tuesday 9th June

On arrival we took the 5 minute walk to the beach with the intention to go into the sand dunes. Just before entering the sand dunes there was a very large, steep sand hill to the right which the children asked to play on, we did not even enter the sand dunes as the children were enjoying themselves so much and spent the whole session playing here. They did the following activities;

- Ran up and down the hill individually, then in pairs and in groups
- Had races
- Did roly poly's
- Helped each other up the hills
- Built sand castles together
- Dug big holes
- Collected sticks
- Explored

Asked the children what they enjoyed about the day

- Running up and down the hill
- Playing in the sand
- Playing with Cameron as I don't normally in school because his friend picks on me
- Collecting sticks
- Digging holes
- Building sandcastles
- Asked if we can go into the sand dunes next week
- Asked if we can play on the hill again next week

Observation

Some of the children played by themselves this week and were very quiet, Laila, Teo and Fynn in particular.

All the children really enjoyed running up and down the steep hill and spent most of the session doing this, they also enjoyed making sand castles and generally playing in the sand.

Cameron and Charlie seemed to get on well and played nicely together. Charlie commented after the session he really liked playing with Cameron as he does not usually play with Cameron in school.

Matthias spent the session either playing on his own or joining in with Charlie and Cameron.

Ellie-Kay and Daisy-May both very strong characters but played well together.

The children commented on how tired they were when we were getting onto the mini bus.

Second session – Tuesday 16th June

On arrival the children both asked to play on the big hill and go into the sand dunes so we spent half the time on each.

- Played on the same hill, ran up and down
- Used ropes, tied them round their waists to pull each other up
- Raced down the hill
- Made sand castles
- Dug holes, tried to find water by digging deep
- Collected sticks
- Played together a lot more this week
- Shared the equipment a lot more this week
- Went exploring through the sand dunes
- Found wooded area with lots of trees to climb in the shade
- Made two swings from rope and wood

Asked what they enjoyed about the day

- Collecting sticks
- Running up the hill
- Ropes
- Tying each other up and pulling each other up the hill
- Playing with Ellie-Kay
- Digging a big hole
- Swing
- Climbing the trees

Observation

The children started playing straight away this week, immediately the children seemed more comfortable with the surroundings, each other and playing together.

Laila started off quiet and played on her own but began to grow in confidence playing with and helping Ellie-Kay to dig a hole. Laila then continued to play with Ellie-Kay, hold hands and follow her lead for the rest of the session.

All of the boys played nicely together and helped each other up and down the hills.

Cameron and Charlie spent the whole session playing together.

Teo and Fynn also played together and helped each other with the ropes up the hill. They also collected sticks together.

When climbing the trees and playing in the wooded area Matthias and Teo helped each other make the swing and took turns nicely. They also let the other children go on the swing and they all took it in turns with the exception of one child who became very impatient.

They children commented how tired they were, they could hear their heartbeat and feel it after running, how they were hungry earlier than normal.

Third session – Thursday 25th June (7 children)

Half of the group wanted to play on the sand hill and the other half wanted to go into the sand dunes so we again split the time in half.

- Played on the big hill running up and down
- Skiing down sand hills with sticks
- Wrote their names in the sand with sticks
- Dug holes
- Went exploring
- Looked for insects such as ladybirds
- Went to wooded area and made rope swings
- Climbing trees

Asked what they liked about the day

- Finding the ladybird
- Playing on the rope swing
- Collecting sticks
- Playing with Cameron
- Playing with Fynn
- Collecting shells

Observation

Fynn's imagination in his play is growing by the week. This week he pretended to ski down the sand dunes with sticks, he is also growing in confidence with his play.

Laila has also grown in confidence and is talking a lot more about play and has started to lead her own play instead of following others. Laila spoke to and joined in with all the children's play this week.

Teo began to talk a lot more to the other children this week and helped build a rope swing.

All the children are sharing the equipment and helping each other more as the weeks go on.

Fourth session – Tuesday 30th June (7 children)

(Unfortunately the mini bus was late today so the children only had 1 hour and 10 minutes to play today)

Played on the sand hill for a short while and it began to heavily rain so the children wanted to go to the wooded area for the rest of the session.

- Played on the big sand hill
- Played follow my leader
- Got wet in the rain
- Made rope swings in wooded area
- Climbed trees like spider man
- Searched for nature
- Made a mud pie with salad
- Did not like it when it rained

Asked what they liked about the day

- Being spider man
- Holding the lady bird
- Making a rope swing
- Seeing the horse

Observation

The imagination in the children's play is growing each week; Daisy-May put a lot of imagination into making her mud pie with salad from the nature, also a lot more patient when waiting for her turn on the swing.

Matthias a lot more talkative today and played with Cameron and Daisy-May a lot.

Charlie enjoyed pretending to be spider man and getting more adventurous in his play as he did not want to climb the trees last week.

Fynn and Teo are getting on very well and Fynn enjoyed going on the swings today as did not want to go on before.

Laila is now leading her own play and the other children are joining in with her play ideas. Laila's confidence has grown to a new level this week and she is very talkative.

None of the children liked getting wet and were worried about their clothes getting messy, they asked if they could go back to school to get changed. We explained we had to wait for the mini bus and re assured the children it was okay to get wet and they would dry. It soon stopped raining and they continued to play.

Fifth session – Tuesday 7th July (7 children)

The children asked if they could go exploring this week so we walked through the sand dunes exploring and finding nature. We came across a large pond which the children played at for the rest of the session.

- Walking
- Finding rabbit holes, ladybirds and butterflies
- Follow my leader
- Collecting sticks
- Throwing sticks into the pond to see who could get the furthest
- Making pies from sand and leaves
- Playing in the pond
- Collecting pea pods

Asked what they liked about the session

- Playing by the pond (all of the children)
- Collecting pea pods
- Throwing the sticks as far as you can
- Playing in the water and filling my boots with water
- Holding a ladybird

Observation

As the weeks have gone on the children have cared less about getting muddy and wet. This week all the children were happy to splash about next to the pond, walk in to the pond and slide down the muddy, wet sand hill.

Teo and Fynn spent most of the session playing together and coming up with new play ideas.

Cameron and Charlie played together for the whole session and Matthias joined in. They are all talking and laughing together a lot more and you can see a big change in their confidence with play and each other.

Ellie-Kay and Daisy-May played nicely together and shared well, much better than other weeks. Their imaginative play has also increased in their play when using leaves as “coriander” and sticks as “herbs” to make their pie.

Sixth session – Tuesday 14th July (6 children)

Asked to go straight back to the pond and play there. One of the girls really wanted to go the big sand hill for the last time so again; we split the time at each.

- Built sandcastles next to the pond
- Threw loose natural items into the pond to see what floats and sinks
- Collected sticks
- Collected snail shells
- Made a mini stream down the hill to the pond
- Had races on the sand hill
- Helped each other up and down with ropes
- Dug holes

Asked what they like about the session

- The pond
- Getting wet
- The big hill
- Running down the hill fast
- Making a river
- Collecting sticks

Observation

No intervention from adults today, the children made up their own play and had lots of ideas. Today for the first time they all played together next to the pond as a group. They shared their ideas, helped each other and got very wet and muddy doing so.

It rained whilst they were playing next to the pond and on the sand dunes, a couple weeks ago they wanted to go home because it was raining but today the children only mentioned it in a funny and positive way “look at me, I’m wet”

All the children went back covered in mud and sand and they did not care, they thought it was fun.

Daisy-May shared very well this week and played really nicely with all the other children, as did the rest of the group. A big difference noticed compared to our first week at the sand dunes.

None of the children wanted it to end.

Summary

Each child that attended the outdoor sessions grew in confidence every week. Fynn, Teo and Laila in particular began very quiet and played on their own for most of the session, by the last week they were happy to play with each other, lead their own play and share their ideas with the other children.

Daisy-May and Ellie-Kay's patience grew and by the end of the sessions they understood why you should wait, share and take it in turns. Daisy-May's imaginative play was fun to watch and listen too; she enjoyed making "food" whilst at the sand dunes out of the nature around her.

Cameron, Charlie and Matthias all played together really nicely and had lots of fun at each session. Their imaginative play grew week by week and Charlie who started off very quiet grew in confidence. Matthias enjoyed taking ownership of finding the wood for the tree swings and making them but took in turns when playing on it.

As a group they all made new friends with each other and as the weeks went on they also saw the fun in getting wet and muddy. The weather and the messy play was not an issue by the end.

Outcomes

Pedometers

To measure the outcomes as a result of the Healthy Schools + Pilot we used various methods. We began by using pedometers but unfortunately the results were inconclusive as shown below;

The school were given Pedometers and asked to measure small groups of children at play time over three dates before we began the play sessions. We were going to repeat this exercise during the outdoor play sessions and with the same children towards the end of the project to see if there was an increase in activity at children's play time. Unfortunately during the first three days the children were found to be regularly pressing the reset button or removing the pedometer and shaking it to make the number increase.

We felt the results would be inconclusive and chose not to repeat this activity.

Class Six

Name	15.05.2009	18.05.2009	19.05.2009
Child C	1820	1709	709
Child H	2650	924	1850
Child K	882	3513	4477
Child J	1159	658	2517

Class Five

Name	15.05.2009	18.05.2009	19.05.2009
Child DM	1415	203	683
Child C	48	661	1172
Child J	156	973	1753
Child N	305	4231	5067
Child T	704	53	1438
Child Ja	1576	0	318
Child O	2816	1733	485
Child D	104	959	912
Child A	262	1255	855
Child S	35	473	2725

Class One

Name	15.05.2009	18.05.2009	19.05.2009
Child F	55	93	2
Child C	21	101	14
Child O	25	39	30
Child T	269	24	863

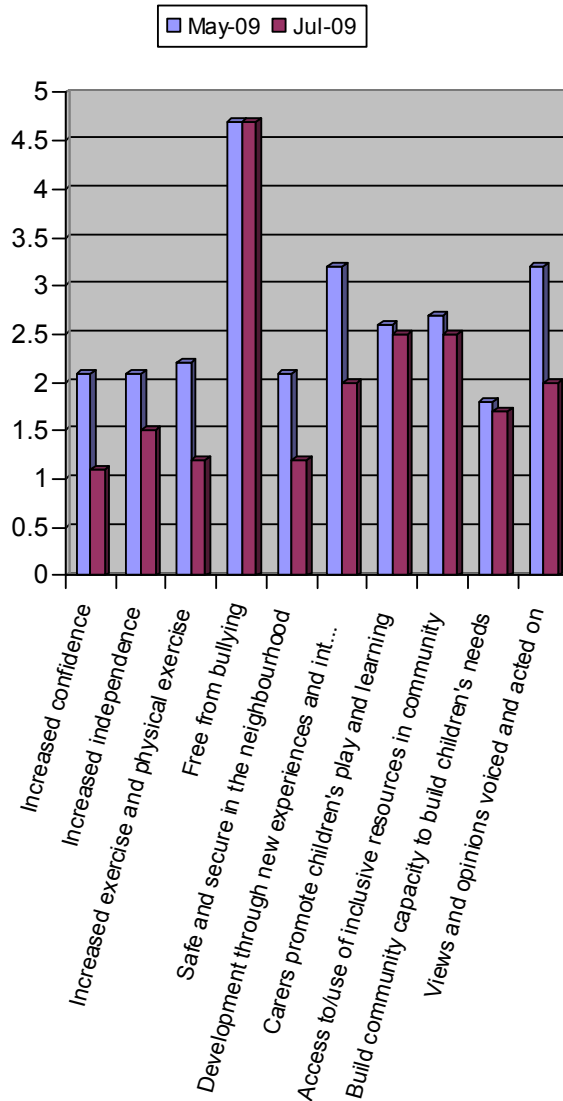
Effectiveness Strategies

We used Barnardo's Effectiveness Strategy tool as a way of measuring with the children that attended the outdoor play sessions what the outcomes of these sessions were. At the beginning of the project we individually read ten short statements to the children, they had the option to answer;

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Don't know 4. Disagree and 5. Strongly Disagree. (1 being more

Positive 5 being less positive)

We then repeated this exercise at the end of the project with the same statements; if the result had lowered it showed an improvement. See the following;



As shown on the chart above there was a small improvement against 9 out of 10 of the outcomes we were trying to monitor. The area that did not see an improvement was “Free from bullying” however, none of the children involved in the outdoor play sessions encountered any bullying to our knowledge.

At the beginning of the project we also asked the children’s parents to fill out the effectiveness strategies which have been incorporated into the May results as well. Unfortunately despite our efforts they were not filled out by the parents in July. Some parents did however send in there feedback to the sand dune sessions.

Parent’s feedback

Has your child enjoyed his/her visits to Berrow Dunes?

Daisy-May: Yes she has made more positive relationships with her friends and her behaviour has improved.

Teo: Yes. Definitely. He talks about it non stop. Teo says “Its Fun”

Fynn: To say Fynn has enjoyed his visits to the sand dunes is a massive understatement! When I told him it had come to an end he was quite emotional.

Did your child tell you about his/her visits to the sand dunes?

Daisy-May: Yes in detail.

Teo: Yes

Fynn: Definitely. Usually when he was in the bath the same evening of each visit but then more and more would slip out over the week. I feel that I know quite fully what they have been having fun doing i.e. climbing sand dunes, seeing horses, forests, ponds etc

Have you noticed any change in your child since taking part in this scheme, i.e. growing in confidence, desire to take part in play outdoors or anything else...?

Daisy-May:

- Behaviour improved
- More patient with others
- She seems to of grown up (not so babyish)

Teo: Teo has shown an improved change in confidence. He used to play a lot on his own but now seems to interact with others a lot more.

Fynn: Not only myself but other members of the family and friends have commented “Oh he never used to do that” or “Oh I thought he couldn’t do that”

From your own experience of your child’s participation in this scheme, would you recommend it to other parents and does your child think other children would enjoy it?

Daisy-May: Yes. Daisy-May wishes all her friends could of joined her.

Teo: Yes I would. Teo said the other children would “love it” but not all the children can go because there are not enough seats!

Fynn: Absolutely! Fynn said that enjoyed playing with other children that he normally wouldn’t have contact with and he liked the small group as it gave him the chance to get to know them. He has also gained so much over these past few weeks I am sad that it has finished.

What has your child enjoyed the most about his/her visit to the sand dunes?

Daisy-May: The freedom to play outdoors instead of being confined to a desk. Being able to express herself through play. The games and the songs.

Teo: Finding things, sticks on the beach and taking them back to school and putting them on Mrs McGeowns chair.

Fynn: Fynn really enjoyed going through the “secret passageway” and playing the trees. I think he just enjoyed having freedom to play outside with no restrictions.

Any other comments...

Daisy-May: Thank you for choosing Daisy-May to participate in this activity. I have seen an improvement in her behaviour and her friends seem to enjoy her company more now. She’s more tolerant and patient and enjoys her time at school now.

Teo: I am really proud of Teo and how he seems to be a lot more confident around others. Considering he is one of the youngest in his class his self-esteem has really developed. Thank you.

Fynn:

Fynn has gained **SO** much from these visits. It is hard to put it down onto paper.

As I said before, everyone has noticed a big difference in Fynns confidence, especially with things such as bouncy castles, swings, climbing frames, climbing fences etc.

I think because of my own physical disabilities causing me to not allow Fynn to do things that I may not be able to reassure him, he had built a phobia about going on a swing etc. If **I** have learnt anything from this it is that I should encourage Fynn to be more adventurous and worry about the problems as and when they arrive. Up until the second dune week Fynn had **never** gone on a swing to my knowledge as he was too afraid, now although he still does not like to go too high he will go on **and** let me push him. A minor thing for most people but a mountain to us.

Fynn has always been quite imaginative in his indoor play but he has also been bringing his beach time into every day play through role play and also has been using the sticks etc that he bought home from there (making fires and he also made a “ramp” by tying two bits of wood together with string and played in the bath with it too) this general confidence in the outside world seems to have blossomed and he has stopped sticking to me like glue when we are out.

We have always walked the same way to school and never deviated but this week he has been pushing his way through bushes etc trying to look for “secret passage ways” It has really made me realise how my physical problems have held him back and I am going to try really hard to keep up the good work you have started.

It has been an absolute pleasure these past weeks to see Fynns excitement as “dune day” came around and his enthusiasm and pleasure in the days afterwards. It has

certainly given me plenty to think about – how to facilitate more outdoor play for Fynn (not easy without a car) and I am hoping to get more family members involved.

Thank you SO much from both of us – you’ve made Fynns year (no exaggeration!!)

(Unfortunately we only received a response from three parents however the response was fantastic.)

Fynn also made his own book about the sand dunes

My visits to Berrow Dunes by Fynn Cooper

- I like going to the dunes – one of the dunes was as big as me
- Today after we played in the dunes we went down a passage way in some trees and with some sticks. Me and Teo playing in the trees, I am bending down picking up sticks.
- Today I was the biggest dune and I saw a car on the beach. This is me sitting on the biggest dune watching the car drive by.
- When I went to the dunes I saw a man on a horse. This was the man riding past me, they were on the sand riding towards the bushes.
- Down the secret passage way I found a pod with seeds in it and a pond. This is a picture of the pond and a pod next to a bush. Me and Teo were playing here and the pods were green.
- I liked going to the dunes and playing with Teo. This is a picture of me and Teo and the car I saw again this morning.

The above comments were all next to pictures Fynn had drew each week.

Comments and observations made by parents and teachers in response to the play sessions – collected by Dawn Warren.

Parent of a reception aged child who took part in the visits to Berrow Sand Dunes.

...He has had a wonderful time and has really grown in confidence. He is much more adventurous now and attempts to do physical activities he would have never done before. I am really pleased that he is getting the opportunity to do things on the visits that I would not be able to do with him (due to parents personal health issues) It is all he talks about and he counts the days till the next visit.

Teacher of reception aged child who took part in the visits to Berrow Sand Dunes.

...he has grown in confidence. At first he was unsure about going but now he loves it and you can see the difference back in the classroom, how he is much more willing to take part in the activities.

Teacher of reception aged child who took part in the visits to Berrow Sand Dunes.

...it has done her the world of good. She really mixes well with other children now. She always used to stand back on the side lines and play alone but now you can see her interacting and playing with her peers with much more confidence.

Teacher of Year One child who took part in the visits to Berrow Sand Dunes.

...he absolutely loves it. He can be quite an unhappy child at school but he beams on a Tuesday morning. He seems less aggressive and less angry and seems to play more constructively with friends.

Teacher of Year One child who took part in the visits to Berrow Sand Dunes

...she is very excited and asks every day is it "sand dune day today" She is quite an emotional child and is always happy on a Tuesday. She is always tired when she gets back so obviously has participated fully.

Teacher of Year One child who took part in the visits to Berrow Sand Dunes

...it is a joy to see her playing so nicely with the other children and co-operating so well. She finds it very difficult normally and can find it hard to conform to rules in the formal classroom environment. Her play has been creative and inclusive and she appears to have grown in self-confidence.

Teacher of Year One child who took part in the visits to Berrow Sand Dunes

...it is doing him the world of good. He does not get the chance to play outside with friends out of school and talks about how he loves spending most of his weekends playing games on the games console. He thoroughly enjoys his visits to the sand dunes. He can find it difficult to play with other children following normal social conventions. He can be rough and overly boisterous at playtimes. During these outdoor play sessions he has played really well with other children, taking turns to have a go on the swing and supporting his new friends where needed. His behaviour has been impeccable. His self-confidence has grown enormously.

Observations made of a reception aged child that took part in the Berrow Sand Dunes.

...this is a child that has an enormously troubled home life. He has a sibling who is very ill and spends much of his time in child-care providers. He is struggling to cope with all of this and often has to be excluded from the class and taken to a room to be supported by adults, for his own and other children's safety, whilst he has extremely violent outbursts in school. For health and safety reasons it was thought with some trepidation that he was included in this target group, however we thought the possible benefits for him would be worth taking the chance. During the whole time he has thoroughly enjoyed the play sessions and behaved impeccably. He loves

taking part and plays co-operatively with the other children, supporting them in there play where necessary and taking turns without no problem at all. It is felt that he has provided emotional support and ‘fun’ time out for a little boy who probably needs it more than most.

Lunchtime supervisor presentation and discussion

We spent two hours with the lunchtime supervisors at Burnham Infants. We began the session by showing the Bristol Scrapstore Play Pod DVD which received a positive response.

We spoke about play and how it is changing, the national picture, so they were aware of the importance of play and who it is supported and recognised by, some facts about how it has changed over the past 10 years, the importance of us changing our views on play now and acting on them and the play policy that will be coming into effect in the new term.

Largely the second half was centred around discussion and about the possibilities of change at Burnham Infants. Some presented barriers but more importantly they did work together to think of solutions. By the end of the session 90% of those attending said they felt more confident about changing their practise at lunchtime due to understanding the importance of change and the benefits it will bring and also feeling supported not only by colleagues but the thought of having a play policy in place in the future.

Activity We put together 16 play ideas that could be introduced at lunchtime and asked the supervisors to categorise them into the following;

Play Idea	<u>Possibly</u> <i>Do tomorrow with permission / support</i>	<u>Might</u> <i>Work Only need a week or two to get organised</i>	<u>Might</u> <i>Work need half a term to get organised first</i>	<u>Impossible</u> <i>Don't ever think we could do that</i>
We would let them climb trees	1	4	1	
We would let them play in the educational area at play time	1	4	1	
We could leave some old car tyres in the playground for children to roll around, crawl through do what they want with	2	4		
We would let them dress up with fancy dress	3	2	1	
Having a gate put in and playing in the field at play time		1	2	3
Playing outside in the rain	2	2	2	
Building dens	2	3		1

Having the skipping ropes and hula hoops every play time	5	1		
You could have musical instruments to play with	3	3		
We could have a box of large pieces of material for dressing up, making tents, for anything	4	2		
We could put out large pieces of card – old boxes and crayons	5	1		
We could let children have giant chalks	4	2		
Play a big game of tug of war on the playground	4	1	1	
We can let children play on the apparatus whenever they want, even when it is damp	4	2		
We can put scrap material in the playground	5	1		
Pop up tents for children to play in	3	1	1	1

As a result the lunchtime supervisors felt that within half a term most of the above play ideas could be introduced and, the reason why they put half a term is so the play policy could be put in place as this was important to them.

“Having a gate put in and playing in the field at play time” stood out as the play idea that was impossible to achieve for half of the group. We discussed the concerns as a group and the lunchtime supervisors were worried about dogs, their mess, glass, needles and boundaries. To overcome these boundaries the following solutions were made;

- Lines painted on the grass to mark the boundaries
- No dogs allowed between the hours of play time (agreed by the council)
- Children signage re: Dog fouling and picking it up
- Lunchtime supervisors carry poop scoops or dog bags
- Children made aware of the dangers of glass and dog mess and to tell a lunchtime supervisor if they see any
- Check the area before break for any needles

The following solutions were made for some of the other play ideas;

Packing the play equipment away – Teachers come to the play ground to collect there class so the lunchtime supervisors have enough time to pack away scrap / hula hoops / dens etc Also getting a shed, if not two to store the equipment.

Playing outside in the rain – It becomes part of children’s school uniform requirement to have wellington boots and a rain coat kept in school on their peg. Lunchtime supervisors to also wear appropriate weather gear.

Enough staff for educational area – Moving first aid out to the playground instead of having it in the hall. This way an extra supervisor will be outside and they would have enough staff to over see the educational area. This also brought up some interesting points that some children play up on an accident just to go inside, this way they can not, the children that are hurt do not have as far to walk to get first aid and a supervisor does not have to leave the playground to take them to the hall.

Overall the presentation and discussion was a real success and the staff were positive about changing there practise at play time. Some positive ideas and solutions came from the meeting and by the end everyone felt it was possible to implement the above play ideas, however, all of the above is based on a play policy being in place as this was very important to them.

Notes from final meeting with Burnham Infants

Summary of feedback from consultation work, play day and outdoor play sessions.

- Loose parts were incredibly popular with the children
- The whole school really embraced the school play day and are keen to repeat.
- Messy play particularly popular
- Children like having places outside to draw – perhaps use paper on the fence?
- Initial concerns from children about rain and mud soon dissipated when they were given a chance to play with mud or talk about how outdoor play in the wet could be facilitated.
- Tree climbing very popular with children but raises anxieties for staff.

School Feedback

- Dawn felt the play day in particular had been really successful and help to change attitudes. Dawn felt some of the staff's approach to this had initially been cautious but now senses there is a lot more support across staff team.
- Andrew had feedback from lunchtime supervisor that they are now very keen to develop this area of work
- Andrew – is looking at how play development can be tied into the school development plan – one idea that is already agreed is 'play-buddies' to promote more mixed class play activities
- Would like to see more free-play incorporated into PE lessons at school
- Felt there was a learning point about how to communicate the purpose of the pilot to all parents more effectively. (** The school had some complaints that suggested that the 'bad' children at the school were being given treats by visiting the beach. See letters from Andrew Marsh & Michael Hammond addressing this situation in Appendices.*)

Action Plan for next 2 terms to support achievement of Healthy School + status.

- It was agreed that the school would re-look at its uniform policy and look to change this so that parents would be requested to provide old clothes for children to use for outdoor play.
- School keen to allow more mixed age play opportunities and more fully utilise the opportunities provided by reception area
- Agreed that school would look to increase usage of the environmental area and encourage activities such as den building in this area. It was felt possible that one person could be allocated to supervise this area when used.
- The school want to continue with the outdoor play sessions and keen to use their £2k budget to facilitate this – staff could transport children to the sand dunes so this would only leave paying for staff cover as the cost of sessions.
- Include play development within School development Plan

How to spend the £2k budget

- The school were not able to make decisions on this during this meeting but the consensus view was that they would like to continue the provision of the outdoor play sessions.
- Some of the budget may be used to promote more outdoor play during rainy days but it felt this change could be largely facilitated by a change to the uniform policy.
- Some work had been done to look at the possibility of putting a fence between the school playground and the next door playfield. Michael Hammond had secured some support from Sedgemoor District Council on this and felt a signage project with Dog Warden could alleviate concerns re dog poo. The School feels they wouldn't be able to find the money to pay for the gate and are still concerned re H&S issues relating to dog poo and broken glass. The potential to use such a lot of space should still be pursued though.
- The school has already purchased a lot of loose parts for the playground and could further explore links with the local scrapstore.

Audit Score Sheet & Action Plan, Burnham Infants

4 = Excellent. 3 = Good, Improvements possible. 2 = Emerging, Improvements desirable. 1 = Underdeveloped, improvements needed.

Scores and comments in Black from April 2009. Scores and comments in brackets and bold from final meeting July 2009.

Leadership and Planning (max 12)	Score	Comments
Champions and Leaders	1 (2)	No champion in place at commencement of pilot (Dawn Warren now operates as an effective play champion within the school. Felt that this needs to be communicated more effectively to the staff though.)
Policy and Planning	1 (2)	No current policy (A draft play policy now produced and will be taken to Governors meeting for agreement in Autumn term 2009 – focus needs to be on communicating the purpose of the play policy to all school stakeholders.)
Risky Play	1 (1)	No current policy – school feels current approach overly cautious (See point above – although the school has embraced some more ‘challenging’ forms of play through this pilot real change will only progress after play policy agreed. Risk Management training with staff revealed a strong desire to develop work in this area.)
Participation	2 (3)	No formal process but good evidence that staff respond to children’s views re use of play space. (School has been very supportive of all the participation elements of pilot and good evidence that they are trying to respond to the views of children.)
Total	5 (8)	

Access (max score 16)	Score	Comments
Accessibility, impairments	2 (2)	No current requirements but school confident could meet needs (No change)

All weather and seasonal access	1 (2)	School acknowledge that rainy days when children not allowed out are a big problem (The schools practice has not changed as of yet but there was considerable focus on this issue during the pilot and clear willingness and practical solutions that the school needs to implement now.)
Playful use of indoor space	1 (1)	No current provision and no space – this may change (No change)
Extended Access	1 (1)	The school provides a wide variety of activities but no free play options (No change as of yet, but forthcoming new build may offer opportunities for extended services and school would consider providing supervised free-play.)
TOTAL	5 (6)	

Play value (max score 40)	Score	Comments
Inclusion	2 (3)	School demonstrates an inclusive approach and is keen to develop this via pilot (This was regarded as one of the most positive outcomes from the pilot and particularly the play day and outdoor play sessions – namely that children who were often excluded felt empowered and more confident to join in. For this reason the school are very keen to repeat these activities.)
Play needs of different ages	2 (3)	School has positive attitude to mixed play (Mixed age groups involved in all aspects of pilot, and new play buddy idea incorporated in school plan. School very keen to develop this area of work.)
Movement	2 (3)	Good movement options via ball games, equipment (School purchased between £500-1k worth of playground equipment using school vouchers. If the potential space offered by adjacent playpark could be utilised more this would make a huge difference.)

Imaginative play	1 (2)	Much more limited opportunities in this area (This has been a very positive outcome from the pilot and school has purchased equipment to facilitate this – positive response from school to play day and outdoor play sessions to more imaginative play and lots of ideas that could be developed over the year. Evidence that children’s mental health benefits from these play opportunities.)
Ball games	2 (2)	Enjoyed by a lot of children but tend to dominate in limited space (No change focus has been offering more variety)
Loose parts (fabricated)	1 (2)	Very limited provision (significant improvement see above)
Loose parts (natural)	1 (2)	Very limited provision (Provision natural loose parts within school on a regular basis is an aim for the future, they were fully utilised during play day and outdoor play sessions.)
Access to the natural environment	1 (2)	Very limited provision (Ideas developing for increased use of natural areas on campus. School very keen to continue outdoor play sessions at the sand dunes.)
Places for children to sit	2 (2)	Good provision but could be extended (No change)
TOTAL	14 (21)	

Care and maintenance (max score 12)	Score	Comments
Well maintained	2 (2)	Good current systems and supportive caretaker (No change)
TOTAL	2 (2)	

Staffing (max score 12)	Score	Comments
Appropriate staff training	1 (2)	No examples of staff with play related training

		(Staff have received 2 training sessions from Barnardo's focusing on play provision by lunchtime supervisors and risk management with the staff. Play champion needs to lead this area and encourage take up of further opportunities that are available and Barnardo's is happy to advise on this.)
Supervision role	2 (2)	Good systems (No change)
Supervision practices	1 (2)	Lunchtime supervisors have not been given play related training opportunities. (Training has been offered and positively received. There is a ground swell of support for new less interventionist approach but this will not develop without the agreement of the play policy and ownership of the staff.)
TOTAL	4 (6)	

Behaviour	Score	Comments
Reduction in playtime disputes	2 (2)	This is not a major problem but exacerbated on wet days (It is too early to say if this will be an outcome of changes implemented as a result of this pilot)
Increase self confidence	2 (3)	School sees potential for play pilot to deliver improvements in this area (This was a major outcome from the pilot particularly for the children that did the outdoor play sessions. All stakeholders have comment on this, children, teachers and parents.)
TOTAL	4 (5)	

Concluding comments: The score sheet above testifies that across the school Burnham Infants have sought to positively use this pilot project to support the development of children's play in most aspects of school life. From April to July 2009 their score has risen from 34 to 48. They have moved from a very low base with lots of scores of 1, to predominantly scores of 2, that fairly reflect the fact that new practice around the development of children's play is emerging but lots more action is desirable. The key actions are outlined above and in the final project report. In order to achieve the Healthy Schools + status it would be expected that these scores have further increased by the final assessment in March/April 2010.

Conclusions: Revised Timeline and Project Overview

After the completion of the 2 pilot projects at Burnham and Manor Court in Summer 2009 the Barnardo's team met to review the learning from the pilots.

The 4 main elements of the HS+ Play Project remain unchanged following the pilots and are listed below.

1. **Planning Policy & Training:** This will be led by a Project Steering Group. Play audit sheets will be completed to give an overview of all aspects of the schools 'play-life' and barriers to play development. The Steering Group will oversee the production and agreement of a school play policy and play action plan. Two training sessions will be offered to staff on playwork techniques and risk management. It is clear from the pilots that addressing an overly cautious approach to risk management around children's play is the biggest barrier to overcome hence the need to adopt a fundamentally new approach via an agreed School Play Policy and offer training and support to staff.
2. **Outdoor Play sessions (with Target Group).** This work will be targeted at a group of 8 children in the school who have limited opportunity to access regular physical activity and play outdoors. The children will take part in a series of 6 outdoor play sessions lasting between 1 ½ and 2 hours at a nearby natural environment setting. At the end of the sessions they will be provided with an activity sheet of further ideas to help them and their family continue to play outdoors. The Play Champion selected by the school will participate in these sessions with the aim that the school may continue to run similar sessions after the completion of the HS+ Play Project.
3. **School Play Day.** The whole school is involved in this day which serves a number of different purposes. It is the public launch of the HS+ Play Project, it is an opportunity to explore a wide range of new play activities and materials on the school site. Staff can explore new ideas around playwork from the training they have received. All of the children at the school will be involved in a consultation exercise to understand their views and needs in relation to play at the school. Playdays are a lot of fun and a lot of mess and can be very inspiring for staff and give the HS+ Play Project a lot of momentum.
4. **Play Space Consultation (with Target Group).** This work will be targeted at a group of 8 children in the school who are in need of additional support. These children will be identified by the school as children who struggle to enjoy playtime and playing. A series of 4 sessions will focus on the needs of these children, how they play, barriers to their play and inspiring new play ideas. The intention is that the findings from this work will be rolled out as part of the school's action plan.

Project Timeline

3 months are required to complete a HS+ Play Project. An action plan is set at the end of this 3 month period which lays out the work the school will need to complete over the next two terms in order to achieve the HS+ status. This will be monitored by the HS+ team (Fiona Moir).

Timeline in Brief.

Week 1: Project Overview meeting with Headteacher
Week 2: Barnardo's staff visit school for tour and playtime observations
Week 3: Steering Group meet
Week 3: Project launch to staff team
Week 4: Information sent to all parents
Week 4: Training with lunchtime staff
Week 4: Training with staff on risk management
Week 5: Sessions with Play Space Consultation group begin
Week 5: School Playday
Week 6: Outdoor Play sessions begin
Week 12: Outcomes information collected
Week 13: Final meeting of Steering Group

Final Report & Action Plan completed by Barnardo's within one month.

Timeline in detail

Month One

Establishing the basis for a successful project. First Meeting

Week 1

- Headteacher is visited by Fiona Moir (HS+ team) and Michael Hammond and lead Project Worker (Barnardo's) in order to lay out the terms of the agreement the school are entering into. The school will be given information that outlines the aims and objectives of the HS+ programme and the Play Project.
- Headteacher will be shown an example of a play policy agreed by other HS+ Play Project schools (appendix B) and asked to agree in principle to work towards a similar document to be agreed by Governors. This is important because the draft Play Policy will be shared with whole staff team at the project launch. This is an opportunity for the Headteacher to highlight issues/concerns.
- School is given advice on how to select the children that will take part in the 2 target groups. The school will need to select these children promptly and produce a short written history outlining the reasons why the children have been selected and why they might benefit from involvement. This information will be held securely by Barnardo's.

- Discuss potential venue for outdoor play sessions, transport implications and costs.
 - Representation on the project steering group is agreed. (This group must include the Headteacher, and ideally representatives of teachers, lunchtime staff, governors, inclusion and parents.)
 - School nominates a 'Play Champion' who will be Barnardo's lead contact for all aspects of the HS+ Play Project. It would be preferable if the Play Champion can attend this first meeting. The role of 'Play Champion will be outlined. They will be required to attend as many sessions as possible and keep a record of the feedback they receive.
 - Headteacher completes a 'Joint Working Protocol' form with Barnardo's.
- Week 2
- Barnardo's Project Workers visit school to observe children at play time and tour the school's play spaces with Play Champion and member of lunchtime staff – this visit will provide us with baseline observations and it would be helpful if the children in the target groups could be identified before this visit. (This visit could take place on the same day as the project launch – see below)

Project launch.

Week 3

It is important to involve as many staff as possible in this afternoon of work so that there is wide ownership of the aims of objectives of the HS+ Play Project.

- Steering Group meets for a 2 hour session to complete Play Audit sheet to establish baseline position of school at commencement of pilot.
- Barnardo's Project Workers and Play Champion agree dates for training sessions, observations, play sessions, play space consultations, play day etc.
- At the end of the school day a one hour session is held with whole staff team to launch the project, raise awareness and tackle key issues like risky play, show Playpod DVD. Headteacher or Play Champion will co present with Michael Hammond.
- Communicate to staff that the results of the 3 month project will be collated at the end of the project and that the school don't need to make changes instantly although they may, and are encouraged to do so. An Action Plan will be drawn up in the final meeting to outline what the school needs to do in order to achieve HS+ status.
- All staff complete a quick baseline questionnaire.
- Play diaries distributed and purpose of play diaries explained to staff

Next steps – establishing the HS+ Play Project

Week 4

- A letter is sent home to all parents outlining the purpose and content of the HS+ Play Project. This will include a play survey for parents to return.
- In addition to this letter the children/parents in the two target groups must complete a consent form and baseline questionnaire.
- Barnardo's Project Workers deliver training to all lunchtime staff attended by the Play Champion. This session requires about 1 ½ hours and will take place in the morning. Project Workers will stay around during lunchtime to continue observations, particularly of children in target groups.
- Michael Hammond delivers Risk Management training to as many staff as possible, including lunchtime supervisors. This will be a one hour session held immediately at the end of the school day. *(The 2 after school sessions could be combined into one longer session if school prefers.)*

Month Two – getting down to business

Week 5

- Project Workers hold the first of 4 sessions with the Play Space consultation group in school. This takes place before the school playday. Session used to find out how children currently use their play space, where they go, how they play etc.
- *****School Playday*****. This is probably the most significant landmark on the journey through the HS+ Play Project. The School Play Day should involve the whole school (including lunchtime staff) and the format of the day will be agreed with the 'Play Champion'. 4 Barnardo's Project Workers will lead and record activities but will require support from school staff. These days are generally very messy (old clothes required!) and involve a lot of loose parts and natural materials. A risk assessment will be done by Barnardo's. Although the Playday is mostly a day to have fun and give the school ideas about potential new play activities, it will also allow staff to adopt new approaches to play delivery. There will also be a consultation element done with the children only to provide more baseline data.

Week 6

- After Playday, begin series of 6 outdoor play sessions held in local natural environment setting with target group. Observations from all sessions kept by Project Workers, Play Champion and children in their play diaries. (The Play Champion will be required to spend 15 minutes with the Project Workers after each session to reflect on work.) Sessions will be child led and focus on free-play and not structured activities.

Weeks 7 - 11

- Continue sessions with the Play Space consultation group (Play Champion to attend if possible). Three more sessions focusing on the views of these children, the barriers to their play and how they would like to better utilise the school's play spaces. Observations from all sessions kept by Project Workers, Play Champion and children in their play diaries. These sessions will utilise elements of Barnardo's Play Ranger model and attempt to inspire new play ideas for the children and the school's play space.

Month Three – drawing everything together

- Complete 6 outdoor play sessions, and Play Space consultation group sessions.

Week 12

- Barnardo's Project Workers do phone calls or letters to go home to parents of children included in target groups to get their views on the project. Repeat questionnaire completed.
- Views of other parents welcomed including those collected from the play survey the Play champion will be responsible for collating these.
- Play diaries collected and reviewed by Barnardo's Project Workers.
- Questionnaires repeated by staff – the Play Champion will have responsibility for collecting these.
- Play activity sheets given to children and families who participated in the 2 target groups with suggestions of for play activities at home and in their community.

Week 13

- Final meeting of HS+ Play Project Steering Group – minimum 2 hour session required. Members of group will reflect on the project, achievements, lessons learnt, plans for the future etc. The audit sheet exercise will be repeated and from this discussion an action plan for next 2 terms will be agreed. This will relate to how the school will spend the £2k budget it has on play delivery.
- A Final Report summarising the project (including the Action Plan) will be produced by Barnardo's Project Workers within one month. A 2 page child friendly summary will be circulated to all staff, children and parents.

Appendix A: Outcomes Questionnaire

Name of person completing form:

Signature:

Young Person

Parent

Partner

Name of Barnardo's worker:

Date:

How true are these statements in your experience?

In my experience.....		1. Strongly Agree	2. Agree	3. Don't know/ Not sure	4. Disagree	5. Strongly Disagree
1people are aware that it's important for children to play outdoors (6.1.12)					
2adults are happy to let their children play outdoors independently (6.1.03)					
3	... children generally play and are physically active outside (1.4.02)					
4	...children are happy and confident to play outdoors (1.2.05) (2.3.01)					
5children bullying each other is not a problem (2.2.02)					
6	... children do get opportunities to get involved in more adventurous and challenging games and activities (6.1.02)					
7	...children instigate their own games and play outdoors (1.2.16)					
8	...children make the most of local leisure facilities (6.1.10)					
9	...children's voices are heard and bring about change (7.1.05)					
10	... we see ALL children playing in outdoor spaces, including disabled children, girls and boys and children from different races and religion (6.1.10)					

Appendix B. Manor Court Play Policy

Manor Court Community Primary School



MANOR COURT PLAY POLICY

Vision

At Manor Court Community Primary School we strive to:

- enable children to become, and believe in themselves, as effective independent learners
- inspire a passion and enthusiasm for lifelong learning
- provide an exciting, dynamic community based learning environment
- nurture, value, respect and care for each other
- personalise learning through active, interactive and creative opportunities
- support and challenge children to achieve, identify, make progress towards and fulfil their aspirations
- equip all learners with the knowledge, skills and understanding to keep themselves, and others, safe and secure
- work in partnership with all members of the wider school community.

Rationale

At Manor Court school we believe that:

Play is at the heart of childhood.

Play is a central part of the learning process.

Play teaches children and young people many life skills that can not be taught, such as risk taking, social skills, motor skills, building friendships and learning about

boundaries.

Play is satisfying to the child and freely chosen by the child. It may be serious or it may be light hearted. It may produce something or it may be done simply for its own sake.

Play is at the heart of our school. A healthy and safe school will be one where we see children outdoors happily playing alongside all other members of the school community.

At Manor Court School we aim to promote play by:

- **Improving Access and the School Environment:** Ensuring that all children have access to rich, inclusive, stimulating and challenging play environments.
- **Involving Children and Parents/carers:** Working in partnership with children and parents/carers to listen to their views, respond to their needs and to include them in the delivery and evaluation of play opportunities.
- **Including Risk:** Accepting that children have an innate desire to seek out opportunities to take risks as part of growing up. We will respond positively to this by extending the range of environments and opportunities available for children's free play while continuing to have due regard for their well being. Manor Court adopts the position statement; 'Risk and Safety: Managing risk in play provision' produced by the Play Safety Forum as an addition to a play policy.
- **Inclusive Play:** Recognising that all children have a right to play. Manor Court will work closely with all children and parents/carers to always consider what steps can be taken to make play provision as inclusive of all children in the school as possible.
- **Promoting the Value of Play:** Seeking to promote the value of free play and an understanding of why free play is important and how it supports children's development to all of the school's stakeholders.
- **Planning & Championing Play:** Play will be included as a central component of all planning related documents produced by the school. Identifying a senior member of the school who will take a particular interest in play.
- **Providing Support and Building Capacity:** Continually look for ways of supporting staff through better training and increasing the status of playwork within the school.

Play in the School Curriculum

At Manor Court School we use the vehicle of play to provide many opportunities to bring about effective teaching and learning.

This policy is written as part of our commitment to:

'Every Child Matters' published in September 2003.

This policy links to:

Citizenship policy, Equal Opportunities policy, Anti-Bullying policy, Behaviour Policy, Healthy Schools & SEAL.

The role of the headteacher

To oversee, monitor and evaluate the school's policy relating to Play.

To provide a leading presence which encourages the positive ethos of Play within the school.

The role of Play Coordinator (this may or may not be the Healthy Schools Co-ordinator)

To maintain a Play portfolio.

To oversee the monitoring of planning for, and delivery of, Play across the school.

To facilitate regular Play based events that respond to the interests and needs of the children.

To identify areas of need by consulting parents/carers, governors, staff and pupils.
To develop Play accordingly.

The role of the class teachers and support staff

To plan for and incorporate Play in specific lessons, and across the curriculum.

To have an ongoing knowledge of each pupil's participation in Play and provide details of this through the personal comment in the child's annual report to parents/carers.

Encourage children to take responsibility increasingly for themselves and their own actions.

Work closely with parents and carers to develop positive attitudes to Play.

The role of the pupils

To know that their play will be supported, encouraged and valued.

To affirm their own strengths, qualities, skills and success.

To take responsibility for themselves and their own actions

To act upon and apply skills learnt in Play both within school and their lives in the wider community.

To show commitment to, and behave in accordance with, the school rules.

The role of governors

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to make sure all practices and policies relating to Play are implemented.

To receive reports from the Head Teacher and monitor the policy in accordance with the review cycle.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the Head Teacher, who reports to governors on request about the effectiveness of the policy.

This Play policy is the governors' responsibility, and they review its effectiveness regularly.

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the school's review cycle, or earlier if necessary in response to changes in Government directives and guidance.