



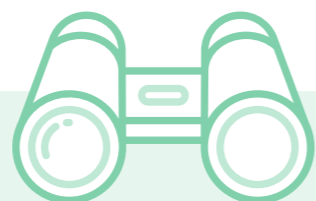
MAXIMISE YOUR PLAYGROUND'S LEARNING POTENTIAL



6 TOP TIPS FOR EVERY PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADER



WHY READ THIS GUIDE?



Did you know that 66% of parents/carers said that outdoor play facilities are important when considering their child's school?

Playgrounds provide opportunities for pupils to explore, learn, and exercise. They contain the means to become a pirate ship, a bakery, a firehouse, a soaring dragon, but just as importantly, they improve mental and physical health, encourage creative thinking, and develop important fine and gross motor skills. Playgrounds are important to learners. It's as simple as that. And the more you put into your playground, the more your young learners will get out of it.

It's not just pupils that benefit from playgrounds, however. Imaginative, innovative, and engaging playgrounds have been proven to attract new intake, improve classroom behaviour and attendance, and even raise the status of the school. That's why it's important to keep evolving and developing your play areas to suit the requirements of your pupils year after year.

With the Six Essentials of Playground Planning, you'll be able to create cost-effective playgrounds, find incredible playground providers that understand your needs, and develop interesting play equipment that can help your pupils learn and grow.

Essential 1 OVERALL OBJECTIVES

Consider your overall objectives for your perfect playground and use them to guide the planning process. Ultimately, your objectives come down to your learners' needs. Who are your pupils, and what are their requirements? Look at the questions below. They'll help you understand your new playground's needs and how far your budget needs to go.

1. How many pupils will be using the playground at the same time?
2. What characteristics will go into your design, such as themes and colours?
3. What is your budget, and do you need to raise the funds?
4. Will you need separate playgrounds for different ages of learners?
5. Have you considered which areas need to be accessible for SEN learners?
6. What add-ons will you need, such as bins and benches?





Essential 2 TYPES OF PLAY

No two playgrounds are alike, but all great playgrounds contain the same crucial ingredients that make them successful. They all contain the right equipment to support a variety of different play styles, as well as provide an interesting and appealing design that engages young learners. There are many different play styles, like active play, imaginative play, creative play, and sensory play. Having an idea of what types of play you would like will help focus your design ideas and maximise your budget. Whether your intrepid explorers are answering the call of the wild from a Jungle Climber, showcasing their musical talents in your own performance area, or sharing stories with their friends in a natural space, playgrounds can guide learning in interesting ways.



Essential 3 AGES & ABILITIES

While pupils of all ages share many of the same requirements for an effective learning environment, there are some crucial differences that you will want to consider when putting your playground ideas on paper in order to make your new play areas provide the right benefits to your pupils.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

With restricted motor skills, Early Years learners need playgrounds that are safe, with enough space for teachers and carers to support them as they play and discover.

KEY STAGE 1

With a shorter attention span than older learners, these learners need visually stimulating playgrounds with plenty of interactive equipment that can hold their interest.

KEY STAGE 2

With stronger reading, writing, and maths skills, Key Stage 2 learners need to be challenged on the playground, pushed to test the things they are learning and fuel their development.

SEN

With a range of different needs, these learners need functional and fun playgrounds that are highly accessible and inclusive.





Essential 4 CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKING

While playgrounds can do wonders for a pupil's physical and mental health, they can also be instrumental in reinforcing the skills and subjects they're learning in school. The right play equipment can be used to facilitate the teaching of almost all subjects in an outdoor environment. Keeping this in mind while planning your playground can take your learners even further in their development, allowing you to create engaging play equipment that gets them utilising the lessons they've learned in class.

Did you also know that the **PE and Sports Premium** is available to provide a sustainable legacy for teaching Physical Education? Government guidance suggests the funding should be used for embedding physical activity into the school day through encouraging active travel to and from school, active break times and holding active lessons and teaching.

Essential 5 LOCATION & LAYOUT

Play spaces can come in many different forms and sizes, so it's important to consider the needs and safety of your pupils. Some questions you need to ask yourself are, is it accessible to emergency vehicles in the case of an accident? How easy will it be for building work to take place? Does your playground have enough space so your pupils can play safely? How many





Essential 6

SURFACING & SAFETY STANDARDS

Keeping safety in mind now allows you to seamlessly integrate it into the design, making it feel like part of the playground, instead of it feeling obstructive or restrictive, and helping you to accommodate it in the budget. Although there are many kinds of safety tools to consider, surfacing will be the first thing you'll need to contemplate in design, followed closely by the materials you want your playground to be built out of. The kinds of surfacing you may want to consider are, wetpour, rubber mulch, artificial grass, and grass mat surfacing. Each have their own benefits, but all are safe for pupils.

Safety is by far your most pressing concern when planning your playground.

You must adhere to the safety standards governing playgrounds.

Primarily, BSEN1177, which governs safety surfacing testing, and BSEN1176, which governs playground equipment. It's important that you adhere to these standards and plan accordingly.

Safety surfacing can account for over 50% of the budget available, so make sure you keep that in mind during your planning process.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A PLAYGROUND PROVIDER



Perhaps just as important as proper planning for your playground, is finding the right company that can both build your dream playground, and understand the needs of your learners. There are a huge variety of playground providers in the UK, so we've put together this checklist to help you compare potential partners.

LONGEVITY: A company that has been in business longer will have a more experience with school playgrounds.

STANDARDS: Take a close look at the quality of their playgrounds. Are they interactive? Immersive? Well-built and designed? If so, the company most likely has good standards.

REFERENCES/CASE STUDIES: A great indicator of a good company to work with can be found in what others are saying about them. Consult the company's reviews. Are they overall positive?

API MEMBER: The Association of Play Industries (API) is a lead trade association for the UK play sector, which provides benefits and services for companies. All reputable playground companies should be members.



PLAYGROUND PLANNING FORM

Utilising the information found in the six essentials of playground planning section, and the what to look for in a playground provider section, you can fill in the form below and use it as a basis for your planning, while also having it as a handy tool to give to any playground provider you potentially want to work with.

Please fill in the form below then save the PDF to your desktop. You can then send it as an attachment by clicking here play@creativeplayuk.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

MY DREAM PLAYGROUND LOOKS LIKE THIS...

What is your playground's theme and colour scheme?	
What is your budget?	When do you want the project to be completed?
What is the age range of your learners?	How many pupils will be using the playground?
Do your learners have any special requirements?	
What types of play do you need in your playground?	
What type of area do you want to utilise? (Is it flat or uneven?)	What type of surfacing do you want?
What do you want your playground to be made of?	What play structures do you want?
Do you need any add-ons?	

WHAT'S NEXT?

As a playground provider with over 30 years of experience, we've created this document to share our experience with you, and help school staff around the country get knowledgeable about the planning process for their playgrounds. We want to help schools create great and functional playgrounds that help young learners develop those crucial skills that will see them become successful adults later in life.

If you'd like to book a call with us, or learn more about what we do, please visit the following link: <https://creativeplayuk.com/contact-us/>

Thank you from everyone here at Creative Play.

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