

Stedham Primary School Top Playground Re-development to a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

Context

Stedham Primary School is unusual for a rural school in that it has no school field. There are two playgrounds; the main one running along the length of the school building and a second, smaller one which is situated at the back of the school and is known as 'the top playground'.

The top playground is a tarmacked area with some markings on it. It runs along the boundary of the school on one side, where there is a 1.7m fence. The other three sides are not fenced. The area tends to be used for the faster games such as football and hockey, so that children on the main playground are not hurt or knocked over. The area is overhung by many trees and so the surface is often covered in leaves and at certain times, in moss. Both these things mean that the area sometimes cannot be used at all if the surface is deemed to be too slippery.

Towards the end of the 2015-16 academic year, we started to think about what we could do to get better use from the top playground area. We came upon the idea of completely re-developing the area, transforming it into what is known as a MUGA. Our School Business Manager took on the project of initially looking at what companies were out there and what kind of areas they could offer; this included visiting a few local schools that had similar areas. Once we had more of an idea of what we wanted, we invited some of the companies we liked to come and view the area and submit an initial quote.

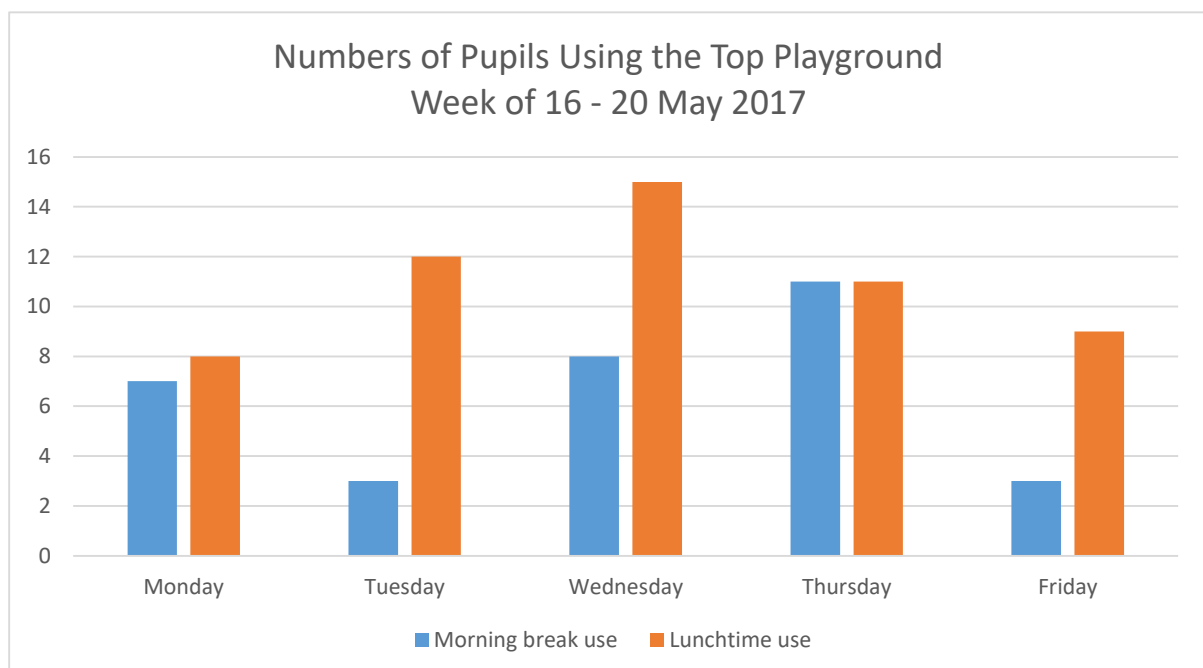
When the quotes came in, it was clear that we did not have enough funding available to undertake the project immediately, even if we went with the cheapest options which involved keeping the original surface of the area. We decided that we needed some advice from other viewpoints and so I arranged a meeting with Leon Carter who was at the time the Sports Officer (Primary Schools & Workplaces) at Active Sussex. Leon advised us that this was a good project to use our PE and sport premium funding for, but as a small school, the funding we receive for a year would still not be enough to undertake this project. He advised that we should create a case study to show our intentions and reasons why we were not spending all the funding in the year it was awarded, and that if we did this, it was valid to carry money over to the next financial year.



View of the top playground as it is now from each end.

Problems with the current area

- Unable to use all the year due to slippery surface
- Balls often get lost and end up on the roof as no fence, or stray into the apparatus area
- No goals to use for football, hockey, etc.
- Can't play games such as netball, basketball or tennis at playtimes as no nets/posts there
- There is the frame of an old fence there which is metal, rusty and not very safe
- Use of the area is quite low as it is not an exciting space!



The Plan

At this point, we talked to the Governors about our plans for re-developing this area and carrying over the funding to enable us to do the work, which they agreed with. Initial plans were for the work to be carried out during August 2017.

One decision which we were having trouble deciding on was the surface of the area. There were several different options offered across the 4 quotes we had but with the money we had, we could not afford them all and we would have had to compromise the quality of the finished product to be able to afford it by August 2017. In May 2017 we sought the advice of a Local Authority Advisor who was previously a PE specialist and they recommended that we should be looking at installing the highest quality surface we could afford so that it was appropriate for a wider range of activities and it would be safer and last much longer. Having discussed this we agreed, and notified the Premises Governor that we no longer wished to rush through a project in three months but wanted to roll it over into the next academic year, which they agreed with.

Update

Even with the PE and sport funding we have carried forward, we still have a shortfall for this project if we want to go for the highest quality surfacing with a range of lines marked, fencing on all four sides and football and basketball nets at each end. We have now started to talk with FOSS, our PTA, about the possibility of using some of their funds raised to supplement the work. FOSS are also looking at other funding streams such as grants and community project fundraising from ideas such as token voting in supermarkets. We are now committed to completing this project by the end of the 2017-18 academic year and so fundraising will begin in earnest from September 2017.

July 2017

From September 2017, the lump sum element of the PE and sport grant was doubled meaning that we were suddenly much closer to achieving our target. In Spring 2018, we began meeting with a range of companies who install MUGAs and shortlisted four who we invited back to quote. There was long deliberation over the surface that we should have before the working party eventually settled on astro turf as the price of this had come down considerably in the last two years. In March 2018, with all four quotes on the table, the working party met and selected a company to undertake the project. They were commissioned and a start date of 23 July 2018 was agreed. The whole project ended up costing less than originally thought as prices had come down since we first started this project fundraising over 2 years ago, so we also have some carry forward to use in 2018-19.

June 2018

The MUGA is finally completed and is an amazing addition to our school grounds. It is a well-used area, both during the school day and for after school club.

September 2019

