

Lancashire Education Awards



Application Form

Please note that sharing good practice is an essential part of the Lancashire Education Awards and by completing this form you agree to be contacted by interested schools. The contact information and information you provide on this application form will thus be published on a website should your application be successful.

Establishment name:	Simonstone St Peter's C of E School
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Lancashire Establishment no (e.g. 02013 or A1005). If you do not have a Lancashire number please provide your full school address and phone number	11060
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Network/cluster name (if you are applying for an award for network/cluster work and more than one establishment will receive an award. Please list all the schools that would receive the award.	
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Headteacher/principal/ head of centre name	Christine Smith
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Lead contact name (if different from Headteacher; this person will be contacted for queries/to provide evidence, etc.)	Christine Smith and Jill Cockings
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Lead contact email address (will need to be checked regularly)	head@simonstone.lancs.sch.uk
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Project title (will appear on certificate, maximum 15 words)	Creating an Inclusive Outdoor Learning Environment that Inspires and Promotes Learning.
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Award applied for (please put an X in the appropriate box):

Award category	X
Innovate <i>A project that demonstrates practice that is new or ground breaking, which successfully engaged and enthused learners.</i>	X
Achieve <i>A project had measurable impact on raising outcomes for pupils.</i>	
Invest <i>A project that has had a positive impact upon an aspect of the wider school community.</i>	
Collaborate <i>A project that involved work across more than one school or work with other agencies.</i>	
Include <i>A project in provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.</i>	
Inspire <i>A project that demonstrates embedded exceptional provision of an aspect of the curriculum. Practice will have been developed and refined over time.</i>	

Project summary (maximum 200 words)

Simonstone St Peter's has maintained a 'warm and welcoming environment that is strongly influenced by the school's Christian character,' and has 'worked effectively to improve pupils' achievements .' (Ofsted report 2018) The current position of a secure team of teaching staff, supportive parents and governors, plus good community links meant we could take educational risks and be adventurous with regards to our teaching styles. Guided by strong leadership and management we began to question how we could work even more effectively to secure higher expectations, whilst retaining our nurturing and cross curricular ethos. The school team began to question: How can we have a greater impact on children's learning experiences, make learning memorable and link skills to real life experiences? How can we develop a learning style that reaches those children with lower concentration skills and the children who find learning in the normal classroom setting challenging? Our large, varied and inspiring outdoor space became an obvious answer - creating an outdoor education that was linked to curriculum subjects and providing challenging outdoor learning experiences! This would include all children, all classes and all teaching staff, consistently using the outdoor provision to accelerate progress, whilst also supporting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This was recognised by Ofsted in May 2018; 'You use this (the conservation area) to encourage pupils to appreciate nature and also to stimulate them in their development, for instance, writing skills or practical work.'

How did you identify the need for this project? What were you hoping to achieve?

At Simonstone St Peter's, the staff were confident with the new curriculum and had focused their teaching of the 'key skills' in all subjects. Children were achieving and the curriculum was creative. However, we are always striving for ways to extend the skills for all groups of children; and through school improvement identified the need to encourage our pupils to be more resilient; enhance the provision specifically for Summer Born pupils in the EYFS as well as the able, gifted and talented pupils in school to ensure that they achieved their full potential. We wanted to create a curriculum that was innovative and broadened the learning experience, therefore enhancing skills and learning outcomes. How could we ensure that all children were given engaging writing experiences, were given opportunities to use and apply their maths skills and could extend science observations and recording skills? We realised our school grounds provided us with the perfect opportunity to get outdoors: to engage all learners, enhance skills and create memorable learning opportunities. The development of a conservation area would be the key to boosting progress, whilst enhancing the creative curriculum that we all valued. Our aim was for all children, all groups, to be achieving their true potential. Skills would be enhanced, resilience would be embedded, learning for life would be encouraged and overall school progress would have improved.

Who led the project?

This was a whole school project – supported by staff, leaders, governors and parents and most importantly the children. The SLT managed the timetabling of events, provided time to plan and team teach lessons, implemented funding to support new resources and CPD events and raised the profile of outdoor learning through the SIP and targets. The shared responsibility and the consistency of the project was strength – everyone had a shared goal and a desire to use the outdoor space to have an impact on teaching and learning. Subject leaders monitored progress and gathered evidence to support the success of the project. All staff adapted their planning, and began linking outdoor opportunities to

their topic cycles. Children were involved in planning the outdoor learning, took responsibility for equipment and resources and took ownership of the activities / lessons taking place. All progress was shared with staff, governors and parents, creating a whole school initiative.

What steps/actions did you take?

Prior to the project taking place, the whole school community gathered at weekend to prepare the conservation area for learning. This included 'tidy up' days, the laying of a pond filter system, the building of decking and pathways. We were very keen to keep the project as sustainable as we could and salvaged tree cuttings to create a fire pit area, lined pathways with branches and embraced wetter areas as muddy play areas.

Using our existing planning and the curriculum skills we all reviewed our topic cycles and developed sensible links to outside learning. We carefully selected key skills that could be taught outside and planned how this would be incorporated back into the classroom – we were very keen to develop these links, so that outside learning wasn't just a 'one off' lesson.

Training was established – asking local outdoor educators to visit our conservation area and for the staff to visit them. This allowed effective CPD to take place and fired our enthusiasm. We were able to gain confidence outside and develop our teaching ideas further. INSETs focused on the outdoor provision, with all staff learning new skills and developing a portfolio of ideas. As a staff we used lesson studies / team teach to build our confidence and skills – taking a risk with our planning and teaching as a partnership was the ideal 'step' forward. We were able to discuss positives of the lessons and we able to reflect upon our practice.

Able and gifted cluster events were held in the conservation area, the aim being to up level skills and experiences. Visiting schools were involved in poetry afternoons and 'using and applying' maths events, all benefitting from our outdoor resources.

To raise the profile of our outdoor learning we incorporated the conservation area into our celebration calendar. RE / worship days were created (Easter story); Christmas events (reindeer visit/grotto) were held there. Summer gala events (treasure hunt, new reception intake (Bug hunt) were highly successful and linked our project to the wider community.

Our outdoors provision was established for all children. All children were experiencing a vibrant, unique, innovative curriculum – raising their attainment and receiving memorable learning experiences.

What was the impact of the project and how was this measured/assessed?

Improved outcomes for all groups of children evidenced through end of year assessments and data analysis. This was particularly evident at the end of KS2 with an increased number of pupils with middle prior attainment achieving greater depth; resulting in progress being well above average in reading and maths.

In the EYFS, further development of the outdoor curriculum contributed to improved listening and attention and children were a lot more imaginative in their play which then transferred into their writing. There were increased opportunities for them to be more tactile exploring nature and develop their gross and fine motor skills and this in turn led to high levels of engagement – particularly from the boys who were sometimes less motivated indoors. There has been a marked increase in attainment of Summer born children at the end of the EYFS In 2018.

Children have become more resilient in their learning – they enjoy the challenges of the outdoors and are more willing to take risks with their learning and don't see it as failure if they don't get the right outcome in a task. They are more willing to problem solve and work together as a team. Behaviour for learning has improved noticeably with the children being highly motivated and engaged; and this has been particularly noticeable with some of our SEN and less able pupils.

As the project developed we realised that not only was it improving the learning experiences and outcomes for our pupils but there were considerable other benefits that we originally hadn't thought about. There was a noticeable boost in mental health and wellbeing of not only the pupils, but also the staff. Team teaching and team building exercises based on the outdoors boosted staff morale and allowed staff to share expertise and skills that were often 'hidden' in the classroom environment. The project raised the profile of the school and strengthened links within our local community and the parish. Utilizing and sharing this resource with our cluster schools has enhanced the provision of other pupils as well as allowing our pupils to gain valuable experience working with those they are unfamiliar with.

Building on our strong Christian ethos of being global advocates for change, the project has increased pupil awareness of the world that we live in and how we all have a role to play in looking after our environment.

What are the next steps? How will you follow up this work?

To truly embed this takes time and it continues to be an area for development in our current 2018/19 SIP. Over the coming terms and years, we will be monitoring the use of the conservation area, making sure the use is consistent and inspiring. The impact will continue to be monitored and reviewed. We will be looking at ways to use the outdoor provision to promote global citizenship and asking the children how to look after our world. If we start with the questions at a local level, we can then adapt our skills to a global level. We are also keen to continue to use the conservation area as a worship place, providing opportunities for collective worship and incorporate our role of looking after God's world.

We are aware that this provision will need continuous monitoring – of safety, resourcing new equipment and of staff training. Careful planning will continue and we will need to adapt and change expectations as our staff and children improve their skills. The whole school profile will remain high and new ideas and events will be evolving throughout the years to come. This project is not static or finished – it's a project that will evolve with the school and its children.

Please attach any supporting evidence – this will be considered alongside the application.

Evidence could include: school improvement plans, governors minutes, e-scrapbooks, examples of children's work, PowerPoints, photographs, letters from parents, anything that demonstrates the outcome of the project.) **Please be mindful that files containing large numbers of high resolution images/video clips may not be received.**

Supporting evidence attached:

Powerpoint;

Lesson Study

Part of School Improvement Plan

Do you have any other advice for establishments that might be considering a similar project?

- A whole school approach – all staff, leaders and governors agreeing on the desired outcome and the steps needed to achieve them.
- Ability to resource the learning – salvaging, reusing when possible. This wasn't a high cost project, but training and initial infrastructure costs we needed.
- Confidence building – using lesson studies and CPD to ensure all staff feel confident to use the outdoors as a learning tool. This included all teaching staff and TAs.
- Linking the project to curriculum skills – making sure coverage across school is varied and age appropriate.
- The confidence to take a risk (with appropriate risk assessments!) To lose our comfort zones within the classroom.
- To gather evidence and impact throughout the project – always asking – how is this impacting on the learning taking place?
- The sharing of positives and negatives – always discussing as a team what improvements are needed or feeling comfortable to ask for advice.

Adviser/LCC Consultant's supporting statement (the application will not be considered without this)

I am delighted to support this application. St Peter's have wonderful grounds, which they have developed fully to ensure that this is put to good use. I have seen on many visits staff taking the learning into the outdoors. This is having a strong impact upon attitudes to learning across all key stages and has been integral to the school's success in recent years.

Adviser/LCC
consultant name

Graeme Lucas

Date of application

15/02/2019

Please email your completed form to advisory.support@lancashire.gov.uk. You should also save the completed form to your computer/network before closing it.