



CASE STUDY

THE GROWING SCHOOLS GARDEN

LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Culture and Creativity Sector

Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre, Reading

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Why we got involved

Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre has developed a tradition of producing large artworks for the school grounds. Over the past few years, plans for these have been developed in art lessons. During the school's enrichment week large numbers of students have been involved in the creation of each project working alongside our art teachers and our artist-in-residence.

Projects in the past have included the design of decorative metal gates; the creation of a pebble mosaic and the development of a wall-mounted mosaic. The opportunity to contribute to the Hampton Court Garden was approached with enthusiasm as this was something we knew the school could do well.

What we made for the garden, to represent Culture and Creativity

The design ideas for the gates for Hampton Court were based on the habitats on either side of the entrance path. Consequently there are dry-garden gates in red and gold with snakes and lizards, and wet-area gates in blue and green with developing frogs, fish and rushes. Each of the gates has two layers of laser-cut steel revealing a multitude of shapes and forms. (See the Make It in the Wetland and Arid Zone for more details.)

The mosaics were designed to represent our local area which, though urban, lies above the river Thames on the edge of the Chilterns.

The plastic banners, made out of recycled carrier bags trapped between layers of PVC, took inspiration from the countryside and from growing plants.

What we learned

The benefit of this mode of working is that students are able to follow the complete design process from initial idea or design brief through to the finished piece. This is especially good for the Applied Art and Design GCSE group. Students have been able to work with a range of materials and also consult professionals both inside and outside school. The learning experience has also included working as a group, meeting deadlines and producing work for display for a specific audience and purpose.

Quotes

'I really enjoyed working with mosaic as I haven't had the opportunity to do so before. Thank you for the experience.'

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Photo gallery



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Helpers and sponsors

Artist-in-Residence Bhajan Hunjan, bhajanhunjan@yahoo.com

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Other information

Gardens play an important part as a resource for learning. Our annual visit to Kew Gardens inspires Year 10 GCSE students while students have also helped design and plant the Science Courtyard garden over the last two years. This won the Reading in Bloom Schools' Award 2006.

The school has a number of art works on display in the grounds. These have been produced in collaboration between the art department, school students and the artist-in-residence Bhajan Hunjan.

Contact details

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