

March 2016

Catherine Coburn – It's been another stimulating month for the Sensation Activation project. As well as organising the homework project and STEM 4 activities, I've also hosted visits from our former pupils and another school group. As part of the project we are keen to open up the new developments for the wider community to use. Last week we invited the old year 2's (now year 3's at Gayton Junior School) to come and play on the new sensory pathways and in the new shaded outdoor classroom. It was fair to say that they thoroughly enjoyed and were very excited with the opportunity to see how much their old playground has changed and were keen to express their views on the new developments.

'I love it! The textures and detail of the pathways are great to play on. They are so much better than the stones that were there when we were at Ridgeway.'

'It's so unfair. We didn't have all of these amazing things when we were here!'

'The new shaded area is a great place to sit and relax. It will also keep the younger children shaded when it's sunny.'

We've also opened up the developments to a school group that comes to visit our Sensory room with their special educational needs pupils each week. Some children with special educational needs often have challenges with their sensory skills. Our Sensory Square and pathways provide a perfect space where they can comfortably explore different textures, smells and tastes. It will be even more of a great space for them to use in the summer when the plants have grown up and they can explore the pathways barefooted!

'This space provides our children with a safe space that stimulates their senses in a fun way!'

Lauren Doyle – This month our Mini-Leaders had been set the exciting challenge of figuring out how we could transform our new shaded outdoor classroom into a 'sensory haven' as part of the Sensation Activation project. The children across the school loved exploring using their senses during the STEM day 4 activities. The children in each class enjoyed moving round different 'sense stations' where they were faced with exciting sensory games. Lots of fun was had guessing flavours of food, identifying instruments, zoomed in pictures, different smells and using scientific language to describe the textures of objects to a partner. Using all of their sense knowledge the children then worked as design technologists, either as classes, groups or independently, to design 5 different sense walls for the classroom. The school council have looked at all of the ideas and have decided that a 'Dig and Chip' event where children can work with their parents and carers would be the best way to transform the classroom.

'I like using my sense of taste to guess the flavour of the crisps and popcorn. It was yummy!'

'The aromas of the smelly pots were interesting. Some smelt lovely...some not so nice!'

'I liked the feely bags the best because you had to keep it a secret when describing the thing in the bag.'

Claire Gray – To celebrate another one of our amazing achievements we held a GRAND OPENING of our outdoor shaded learning area. We presented the challenge of leading the Grand Opening to one of our Mini-Leaders. The year 2 girl we selected had demonstrated increased levels of confidence, responsibility and ability to talk in front of an audience when we had visited the Council Chamber. The whole school gathered to listen to her speech and see her cut the red ribbon. She excelled!! The whole school felt very proud in many ways. The children have been thoroughly enjoying the new shaded area at playtimes and learning times – what a fantastic space it is!

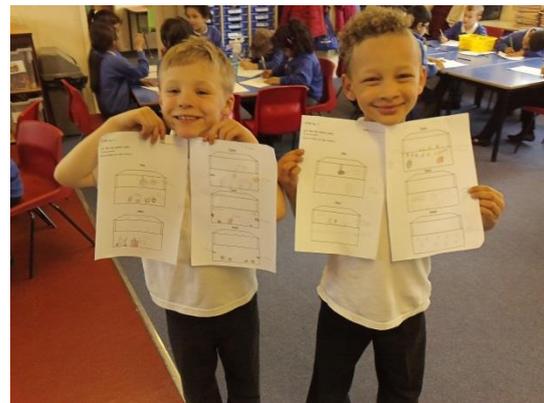
'I loved talking to the whole school when I opened the outdoor classroom. I had butterflies in my tummies but felt proud of myself afterwards.'

Chris Morris - Well this month has flown by, I have designed and arranged two planters for the outdoor classroom and will be erecting them over the Easter Holidays in time for the children, parents, carers and staff to plant sensory plants during the 'Dig and Chip' event. I've also been very busy updating the website, which is now fully updated with photos & quotes from all involved.

After the Easter break we are looking forward to hosting our second 'Dig and Chip' event for the children, parents and carers. Here they will work together to plant and make crafts to transform the outdoor classroom into a 'sensory haven'. We have been receiving updates from the wood carver who is making our story chair and are hoping to have it installed and ready for the children to use after the Easter break. We can't wait to receive the children's homework to tell us what they have enjoyed the most about the project. We are also planning on holding a polling station where the children will vote for a new exciting name for the outdoor classroom. We have just over £1800 left in the budget to purchase the story chair and pay for the 'Dig and Chip' resources.



The year 3's from Gayton Junior School had lots of fun exploring the new developments on their old playground!



Our Mini-Leaders were talented Scientists and Design Technologists on STEM day 4. The activities certainly activated their senses as well as their imaginations!



One of our Mini-Leaders was thrilled to be asked to open the new shaded outdoor classroom in front of the whole school. What a clear and confident speech she gave! We were all so proud!