

Precedent Images



Figure 37: Sensory play and Forest School learning experiences



Figure 38: Interactive, flexible areas that include formal and informal outdoor activities



Figure 39: Proposals include habitat enhancement and creation for ecological benefits and learning opportunities



Figure 40: Informal elements from natural materials with flexible use



Figure 41: Raingardens and SuDS elements provide visual amenity and interactive learning



Figure 42: Mown footpaths within meadow and grassland areas for exploratory play



Figure 43: Formal seating and outdoor tables



Figure 44: Willow and wooden structures to create quiet areas and natural play



Figure 45: SuDS basins seeded with wildflower meadows provide ecological benefits

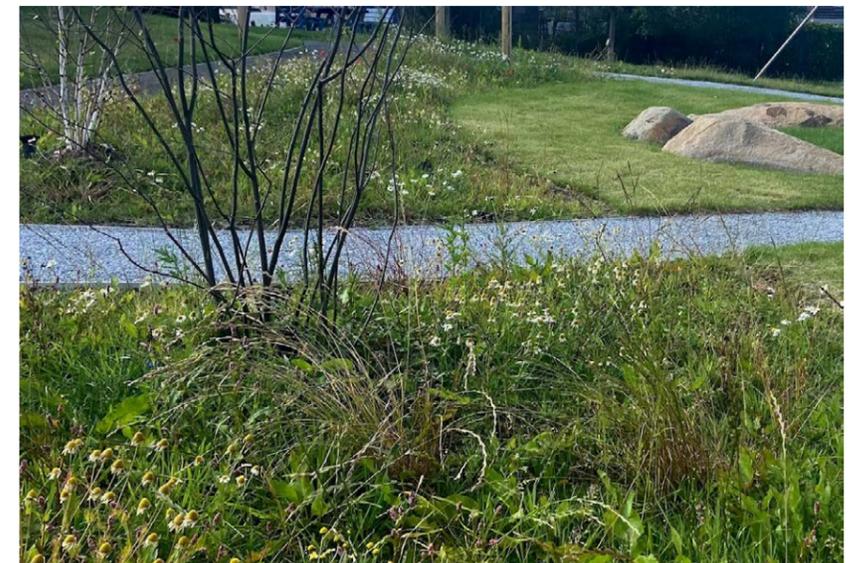


Figure 46: A varied planting palette provides a multi-sensory learning and play experience

Soft Landscape and Tree Strategy

7.12 Around the school building, a composition of ornamental grasses, structural shrubs, and blocks of herbaceous perennials for year-round colour and form are proposed, under planted with bulbs for seasonal interest.

7.13 A sensory-rich mix proposed for locations adjacent to play areas, combining low-maintenance, wildlife-friendly shrubs and herbaceous plants to encourage interaction and exploration.

7.14 The scrub mix proposed alongside the school boundaries provide a soft transition to existing vegetation and reinforce the ecological buffer.

7.15 The shrub native mix within the car park area provides valuable habitat, visual screening, and structural diversity.

7.16 Three hedge types are proposed to reflect their context:

- Mixed Native Hedges – to enhance biodiversity and character.
- Single Native Species Hedges – Used where a simplified aesthetic is desirable while retaining ecological benefit.
- Single Ornamental Hedges – Used within the school managed areas for structure and formality.

Grasses

7.17 To maximise biodiversity while maintaining functional open space, four grass types are included:

- Amenity Grass – Use minimised to areas of highest wear only.
- Flowering Lawn – A versatile alternative to amenity turf; it supports pollinators and can be managed as short-cut lawn or left to flower.

- Grassland mix – Proposed throughout the site, with mown paths to encourage access and engagement.

- Wet Meadow – Located at the bases of swales and basins to support wetland biodiversity and manage stormwater.



Figures 47: Soft Landscaping Strategy - SLR



Figures 48: Image taken from Plant Partner

Tree Planting Strategy

7.18 The trees have been chosen for their ecological benefits, form, variety of textures, silhouette and colour variation throughout the year. They are suitable for their location, provide screening, filtered views and ecological enhancement, while creating an engaging sensory experience for the pupils and staff alike.

7.19 Orchard trees provide a distinct habitat, learning opportunities for the pupils and may offer monitored culinary benefits. Orchard trees within the school garden will have soft fruit only, while those in areas that will not be accessible to pupils will have both soft and hard fruit.

7.20 Native trees are specified around the perimeter, the northern and southern areas of the site. Trees in the proximity of the building have more ornamental features, while trees within the car park have a columnar, upright crown shape. Refer to Planting Plans 403.065419.00001_SC79, SC80 and SC81 for details and locations.

Tree species

- Acer campestre
- Betula pendula
- Carpinus betulus
- Betula utilis subsp. jacquemontii
- Fagus sylvatica
- Prunus avium
- Quercus robur
- Sorbus aria
- Sorbus aucuparia
- Ginkgo biloba (male)
- Liquidambar styraciflua
- Acer campestre 'Elegant'
- Acer campestre 'Elsrijk'
- Betula pendula
- Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine'
- Malus baccata 'Street Parade'
- Malus trilobata
- Sorbus aucuparia 'Sheerwater Seedling'

Small Multi-stem tree

- Magnolia spp.
- Amelanchier lamarckii
- Cornus kousa

Orchard trees

- Prunus spp. (particularly in areas accessed by pupils)
- Malus domestica spp. (exclusively in areas that cannot be accessed by pupils)
- Pyrus communis 'Conference' (exclusively in areas that cannot be accessed by pupils)



Figure 49: Acer campestre - autumn leaves



Figure 50: Acer campestre 'Elsrijk'



Figure 51: Prunus avium



Figure 52: Amelanchier lamarckii - flowers and leaves



Figure 53: Liquidambar styraciflua - autumn leaves



Figure 54: Malus trilobata - flowers and fruit



Figures 60: Tree Strategy - SLR



Figure 55: Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine'



Figure 56: Betula pendula



Figure 58: Magnolia stellata - flowers



Figure 57: Ginkgo biloba - autumn leaves



Figure 59: Quercus robur - maturity



Figure 61: Prunus 'Umineko' - spring flowers



Figure 62: Sorbus aucuparia

Hard Landscape and Furniture Strategy

7.21 The hard material palette has been carefully selected in response to the intended use, the overall design character and its long-term maintenance, ensuring durability and visual consistency.

7.22 Access roads and footpaths:

Asphalt is proposed for the main access road and loop and its adjacent footpaths, with standard concrete kerbs and edgings.

7.23 Staff car park:

Reinforced grass system to the car park area with edging, seeded with a hard wearing grass mix to manufacturer's recommendations ensures a reduced visual impact and a permeable surfacing.

7.24 Drop off and school entrance area:

To enhance a sense of arrival, the entrance area is specified in a feature permeable paving block, with a herringbone pattern and standard kerbs to tie in with the wider road strategy. This area is mainly pedestrian and provides a generous space in front of the school as pupils arrive or wait to be picked up, but it does need to accommodate occasional vehicular access and fire engine tracking.

7.25 Main footpath north of building:

The main circular footpath is specified in a resin bound gravel in a natural, buff colour.

7.26 Secondary footpaths:

Informal mown grass footpaths traverse the school garden, providing additional routes through meadow and grassland.

7.27 Outdoor break-rooms:

The areas immediately outside the classrooms, which function as outdoor seating and learning spaces will be surfaced in permeable block paving in natural, warm colours, with kerbs and edgings specified to tie in with the wider areas.

7.28 Safety surfacing:

A variety of safety surfacing materials will be used depending on the play area character, equipment and accessibility requirements:

- the MUGA and play area north of the building will feature tiger mulch and wetpour surfacing in buff, natural colours, with small areas of brighter colours to reflect the natural setting and provide a diverse visual and tactile play experience. This reflects the need for higher accessibility and fall protection, due to the play location and the range of activities and equipment.
- Play Sand is proposed under the climbing net element, providing an additional tactile experience
- In areas where grass is proposed around play or outdoor gym equipment, safety matting will be installed to ensure compliance with safety standards while maintaining a green aesthetic
- The informal playing field to the north-east will be seeded in a hard-wearing, sports area grass mix

Furniture Strategy

7.29 A consistent, yet flexible furniture palette is proposed including benches, inclusive picnic benches, refuse bins, bollards and cycle stands.

7.30 While a simple, cohesive material language is maintained throughout, keeping in line with the materials of the school building, site character and play elements, subtle variations are introduced to respond to the specific use of the items. Refer to drawings 403.065419.00001_SC77 and SC78 for further details and locations.



Figures 63: Hard Surfacing Strategy - SLR



Figure 64: Asphalt with standard kerbs to access and loop road and adjacent footpaths



Figure 65: Bound gravel surfacing to footpaths and activity areas



Figure 66: Feature block paving to the entrance area



Figure 67: Surfacing to play areas - rubber mulch and wetpour

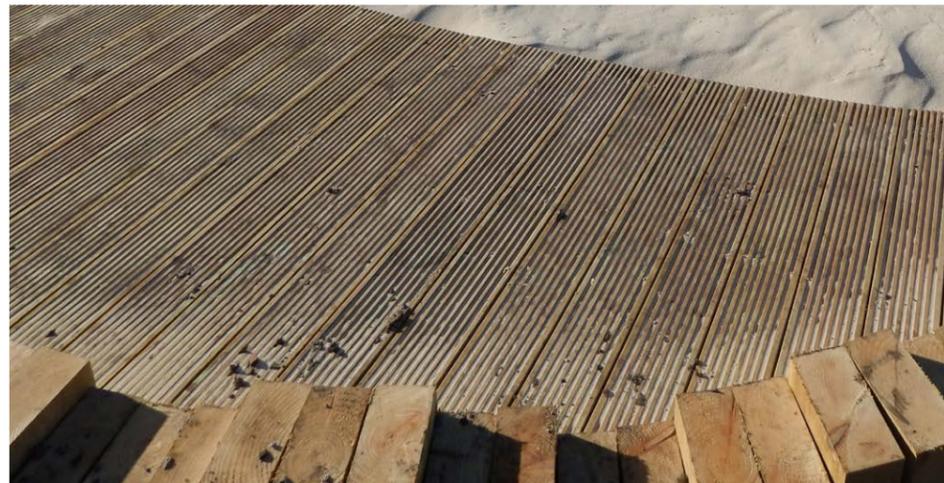


Figure 68: Surfacing to play areas - timber decking



Figure 69: Reinforced grass system to staff car park



Figure 70: Permeable block paving to Horticultural Area and Break-rooms



Figure 71: Transitions between surfacing provides a diverse tactile - visual experience and delineates different uses/ spaces.

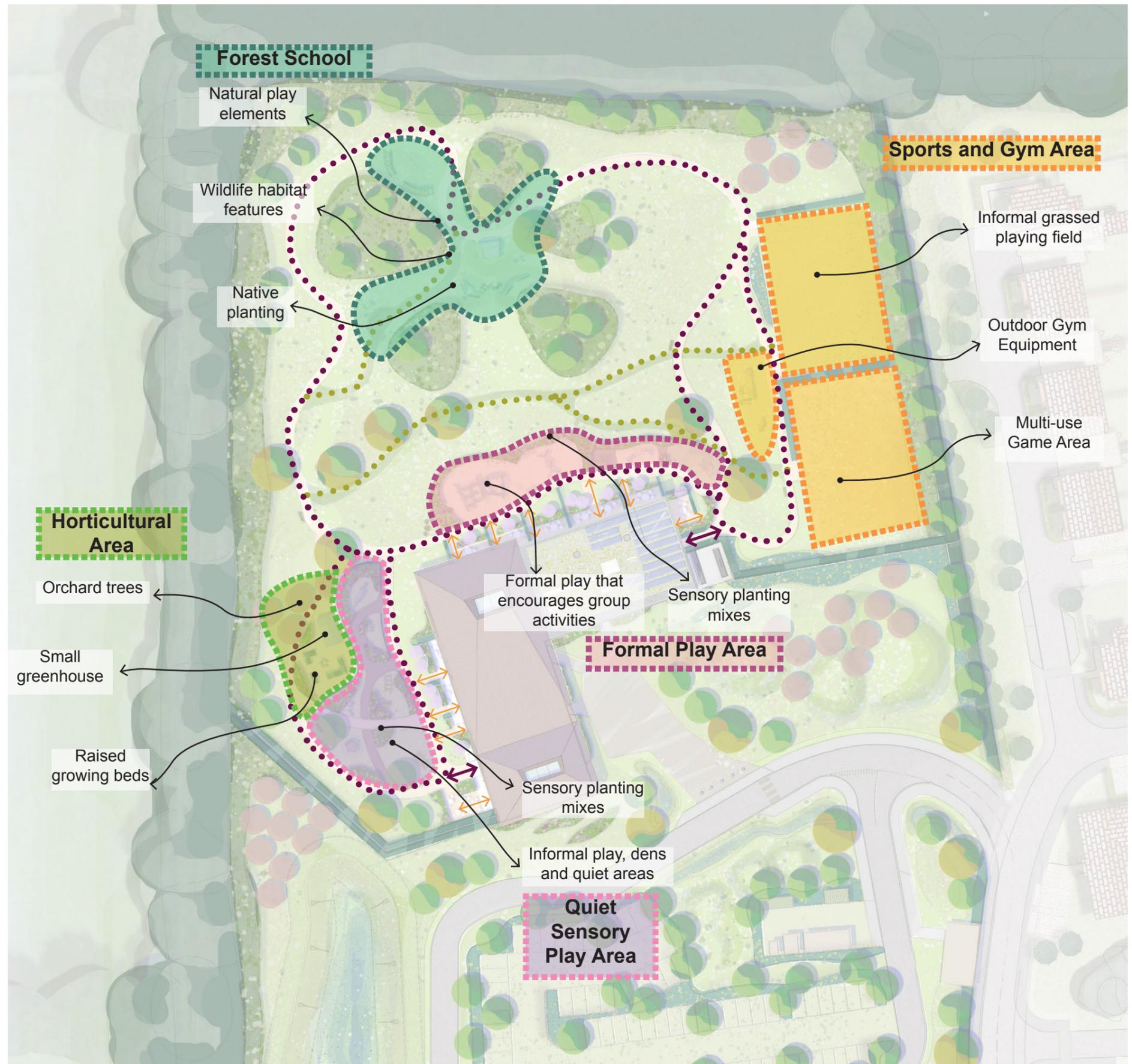
Play Strategy Detail

7.31 The play strategy aims to provide a variety of formal and informal play experiences, for a diverse range of ages and requirements.

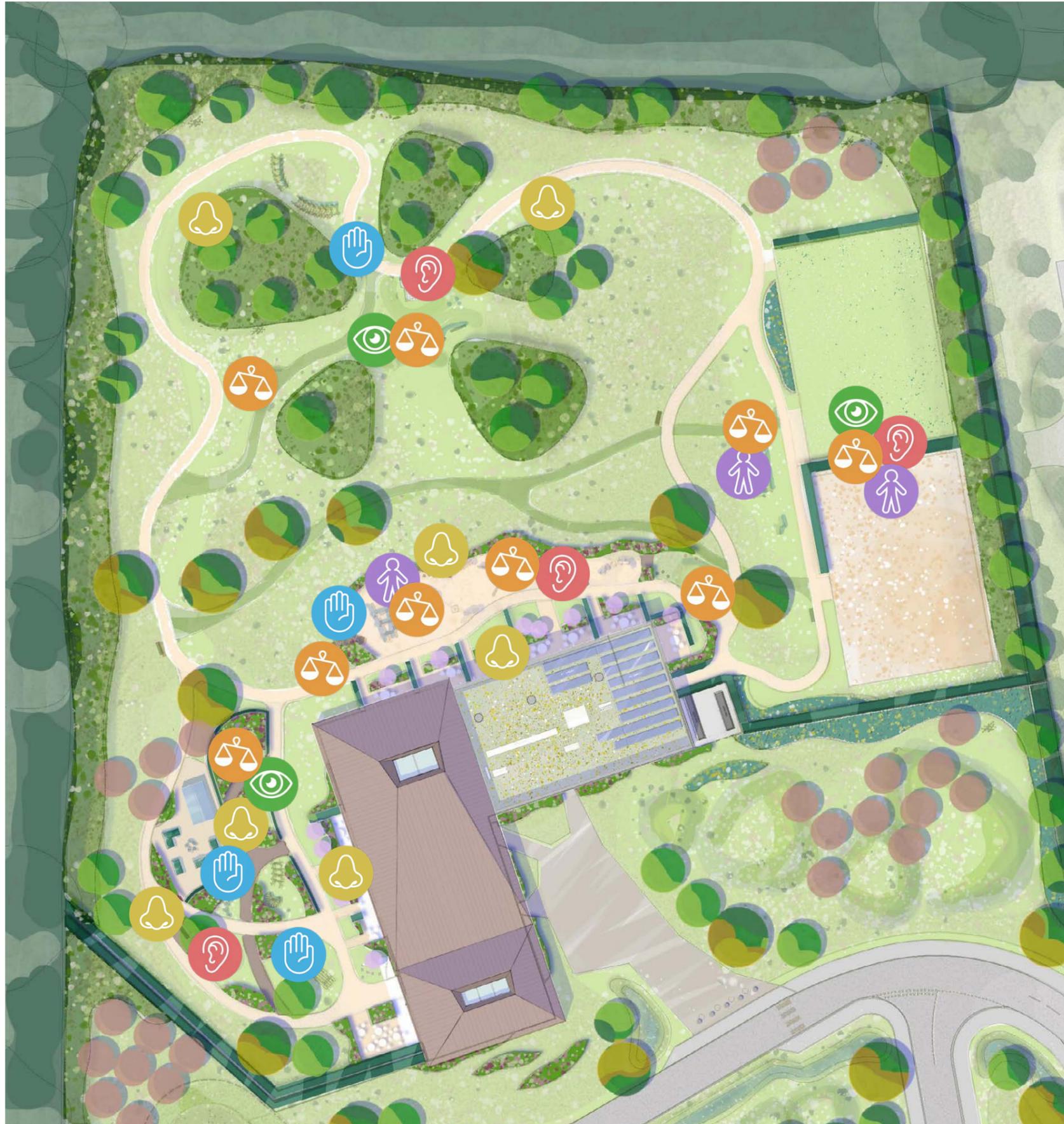
The play proposals deliver:

- Outdoor play through the provision of a Multi-use Game Area and an informal, grassed kick about area in the north-east area of the school.
- Outdoor gym equipment in the vicinity of the playing fields, providing proximity for all sports-related activities
- Formal play equipment immediately to the north of the school, which provides a variety of inclusive play experiences (swinging, climbing, rocking, jumping and balancing). These are set in a range of tactile play surfaces (wetpour, grass, sand, decking, resin bound gravel). Musical play equipment is proposed outside the Music Classroom and the play area is set within a sensory play planting mix
- Quiet pockets of green space within sensory plant mixes provide hammocks, dens, teepees and other informal seating and play, ensuring there are spaces for quiet reflection and a break from potentially louder activities, set in the north and north-east areas of the school
- Adjacent to the above quiet area sits the Horticultural Area, which provides accessible raised planting beds and a small greenhouse
- to the north, set within native planting, formal and informal equipment provides opportunities for outdoor learning and a Forest school

7.32 All play equipment is made of timber and the overall surfacing is specified in natural, buff colours, with small areas of colour, to provide a wide range of sensory experiences, together with the diverse tactile and visual experience.



Figures 72: Proposed Play Strategy - SLR



Figures 73: Proposed Sensory Strategy - SLR

Senses prioritised

-  Sight
-  Sound
-  Smell
-  Touch
-  Proprioception
-  Vestibular



Figure 74: Shade, sensory and seasonal interest will be created through the use of multi-stem trees within and around the play spaces.

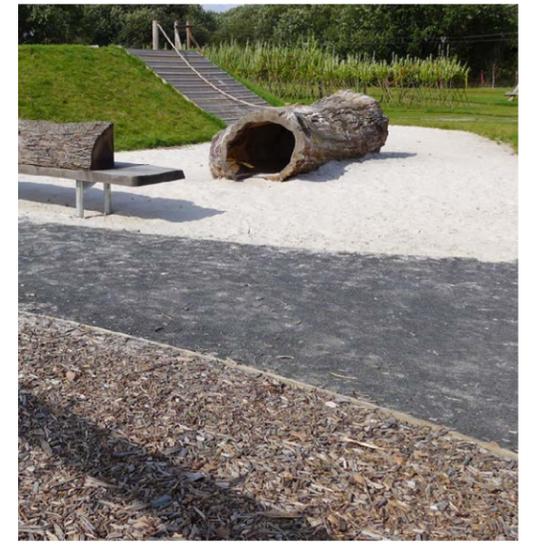


Figure 75: Planting beds will help create a buffer around different areas of activity within the play spaces. As well create sensory stimulation through tall grasses and colourful, fragrant shrubs.

Figure 76: The majority of play areas will be wheelchair accessible, with appropriate safety play paving. Changes between paving materials will help to create clear boundaries between activity zones and create textural stimulation.

Play Strategy - Formal Play Area



Figure 77: Formal Play Area Strategy - SLR



Figure 78: Rope & Timber Climbing Structure by Timberplay



Figure 79: Basket Swing - by Timberplay



Figure 80: Gentle earth mound



Figure 85: Chime Arch - by Timberplay



Figure 81: Stepping Logs



Figure 82: Boulders



Figure 83: Climbing Rope by Timberplay



Figure 84: Sound Cushions - by Timberplay

Play Strategy - Sensory Play and Horticulture Area



Figure 86: Proposed Sensory and Horticulture Area Strategy - SLR



Figure 87: Hammock by Playequip



Figure 88: Horticultural Area with raised beds



Figure 89: Living Willow Structures



Figure 90: Timber Teepee by Playequip



Figure 91: Greenhouse



Figure 92: Sensory Planting



Figure 93: Proposed Forest School Area Strategy - SLR



Figure 97: Living Willow Structures



Figure 98: Rubbing Posts



Figure 99: Log Pile



Figure 94: Timber Stage



Figure 95: Climbing Logs, Steps & Mounds



Figure 96: Informal Seating



Figure 100: Bug Hotel

Play Strategy - Outdoor Gym & Playing Fields Area



Figure 101: Proposed Outdoor Gym & Playing Fields Area Strategy - SLR



Figure 102: Combined wooden outdoor gym by Playequip

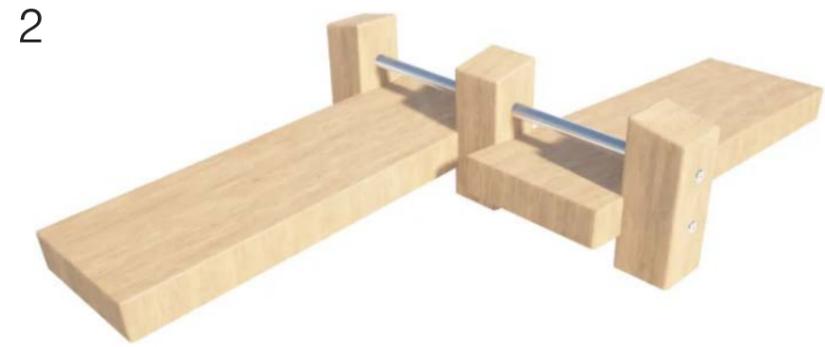


Figure 103: Double sit-up benches by Playequip



Figure 104: Multi-Use Games Area



Figure 105: Grassed informal kick about area

Ecology and Biodiversity

7.33 The application is accompanied by a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) (Ref. 403.065419.00001_SC84) which is coordinated with the submitted ecology information, including the Ecological Appraisal (Aspect Ecology, 2026) and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Aspect Ecology, 2026).

7.34 The management of the site layout (existing and proposed vegetation/ habitats and features) would seek to address the following management objectives in line with the site use, local policy and landscape character assessments:

- Provide well-maintained recreational and educational facilities, with open spaces and play areas that enhance the district’s existing educational assets, and are safe, secure and usable spaces that are accessible to all and in line with the SEN School user needs and requirements;
- Protect and enhance the landscape’s key characteristics and ensure the proposed development reflects the local landscape’s character (LCA4);
- Protect existing trees and enhance levels of tree cover to retain and enhance the district’s green infrastructure network and increase resilience to climate change (Policy DP37 and LCA4);
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing native hedgerows and hedgerow trees, replant hedgerows where they have been lost, and replant single oaks in hedgerows (LCA4).



Figure 106: Proposed ecological features

- Ecology features
- Bat boxes
 - Bird boxes
 - Bug hotels
 - ▲ Hibernacula/ Log piles

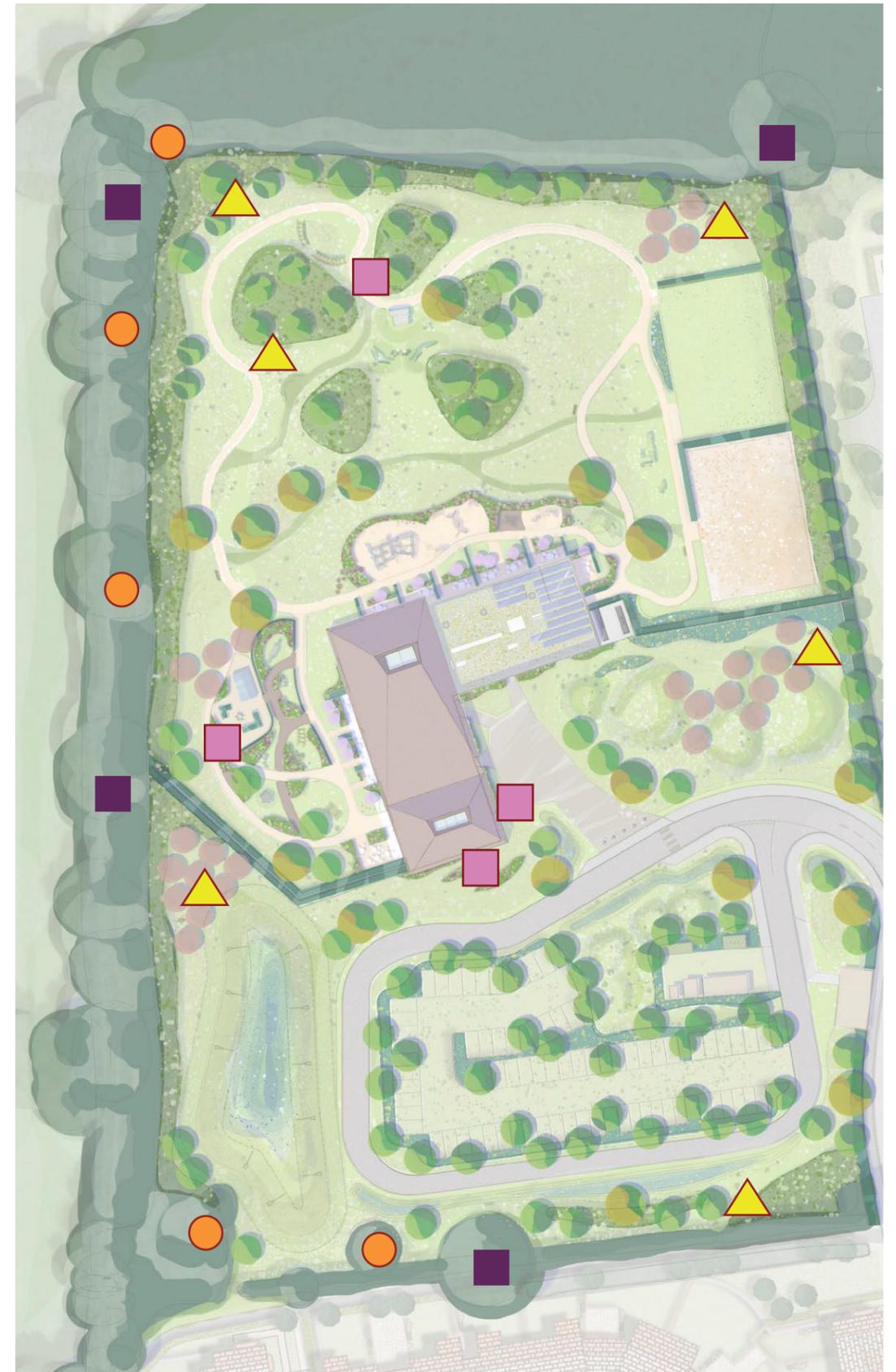


Figure 107: Proposed location of ecological features on site - SLR