

The Kingsway educational approach makes clear that the outdoor space is not simply a playground. It is an extension of the nursery's teaching environment a "classroom without walls" where all seven areas of learning can be delivered. Children may be outside reading, talking with adults, painting, counting natural objects, planting, investigating insects and plants, undertaking role play, using the mud kitchen, developing language, or working in small groups. Physical play is therefore only one element of outdoor provision.

Our position is strongly supported by page 12 of the Design and Access Statement. The proposed outdoor environment includes specific areas for **art, reading, role play, construction, sand play, a baby garden, mud kitchen and planting/growing**, alongside designated physical-play areas. The plan itself therefore demonstrates that the majority of the outdoor environment is intended as varied educational provision rather than one undifferentiated playground.

The outdoor environment as a classroom without walls

Kingsway Nurseries' educational philosophy is based upon creating enabling environments both indoors and outdoors in which every child is able to be unique and able to pursue their individual interests. The outdoor environment is therefore not simply an area for periods of energetic physical play it is an integral part of the nursery curriculum effectively a classroom without walls.

All seven areas of learning can take place outdoors. Children may be engaged in storytelling and conversation, literacy, mathematics, art, imaginative play, scientific exploration, gardening, construction, sensory experiences and small-group teaching, as well as physical development. Many of these experiences generate no greater level of activity or sound simply because they take place outdoors.

The submitted design reflects this philosophy. Rather than providing a single open playground, the outdoor environment has deliberately been divided into defined learning areas including a book area, art provision, role play, construction, sand, a baby garden, mud kitchen, growing areas and separate physical-play provision.

We fully recognise that some forms of children's activity can generate higher levels of sound and that the nursery has a responsibility to protect the reasonable amenity of neighbouring residents. However, the appropriate response is to manage the activities which may generate significant sound rather than restrict children's general access to their outdoor learning environment.

The design already contains physical mitigation specifically for this purpose. A 2-metre acoustic timber fence is proposed along the western boundary in order to minimise noise impact on neighbouring residential properties. In addition, the nursery can manage the positioning, timing and size of more energetic group activities, utilise quieter learning areas adjacent to sensitive boundaries and ensure that outdoor provision is appropriately supervised.

This provides a proportionate balance between the needs of neighbouring residents and the educational needs of young children. The presence of children outdoors should not in itself be treated as a noise event. What should be considered and managed is the nature and level of any particular sound-producing activity.

Consequently, a blanket restriction on the hours during which children may use the outdoor environment would also restrict quiet curriculum activities such as reading, gardening, art, conversation and exploration, despite those activities having limited acoustic impact. A more proportionate approach would be to manage potentially noisy activities through the nursery's operational and noise-management arrangements while allowing normal educational use of the outdoor classroom.

We look to follow the children's natural rhythms throughout the day and therefore there would be times when the garden is not being used.

We would propose that children arrive for breakfast and have time in their family groups and would not enter the garden until 9am. On most days children would return to their rooms for a short snack time maybe 30 minutes and then the garden would empty at around 11.30am for lunch and sleep/rest times with the children given the option to return at 1.30 pm and vacating the garden by 5pm for the beginning of collection from parents. In between the 1.30pm time and 5pm there is a short break for a teatime snack again of approximately 30mins.

It is important to note that older children have free flow access which means that some choose to stay inside. The younger groups are led by the staff team and on most days we enter the garden space half a group at a time.

In practice what this means is, on a typical day which is 8am till 6pm, 10 hours in total, children will only be in the garden space for 5 hours.