

Sustainability in the Early Years

ECEY6005 2012728



Discover

My parents have always really enjoyed gardening. The garden in my childhood home has always been very bright and colourful and even now it is the same. There are all different types of flowers and plants growing, varying from roses to pear trees. I learnt from a young age the importance of this for the environment and living things. My parents grew different types of fruit including strawberries, apples and pears. My parents taught me how to grow the fruit and how to look after them from year to year. I remember as a child feeling really excited to pick the fruit when it was ripe and tasting it for the first time. It was a very special moment! Since working at the school, I always make sure to pass what I have learnt down to the children in my care.

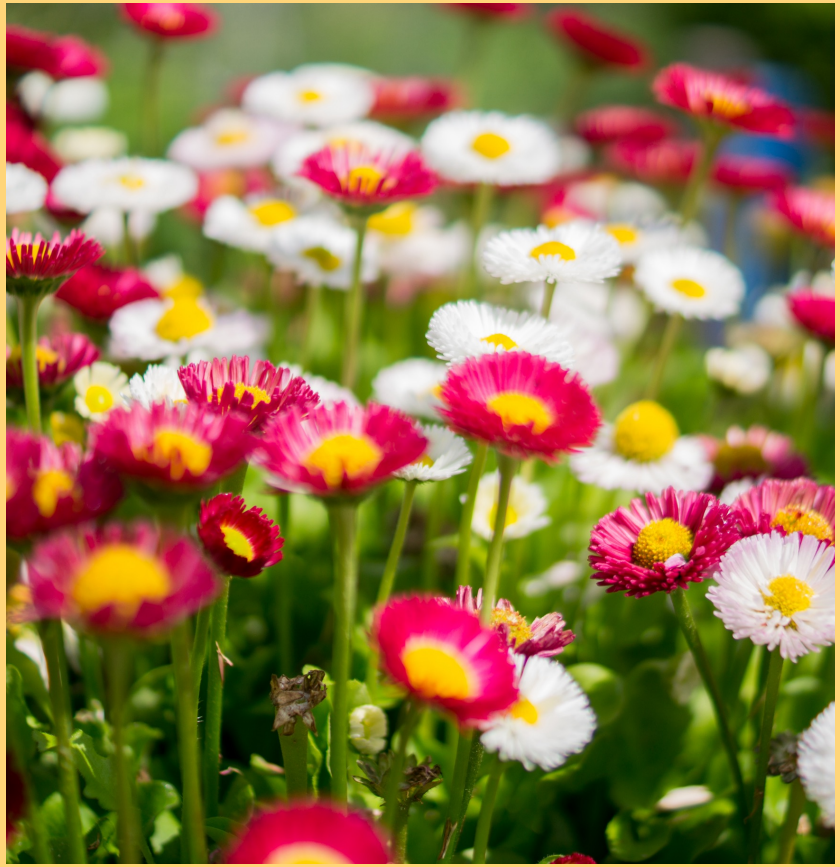
Discover the area...

Within the school grounds, we are fortunate to have quite a large woodland area where there are many different types of trees where a lot of wildlife live. The children have seen many different insects here such as spiders, woodlouse, ants, bees and butterflies! The children enjoy learning about the different types of wildlife here.

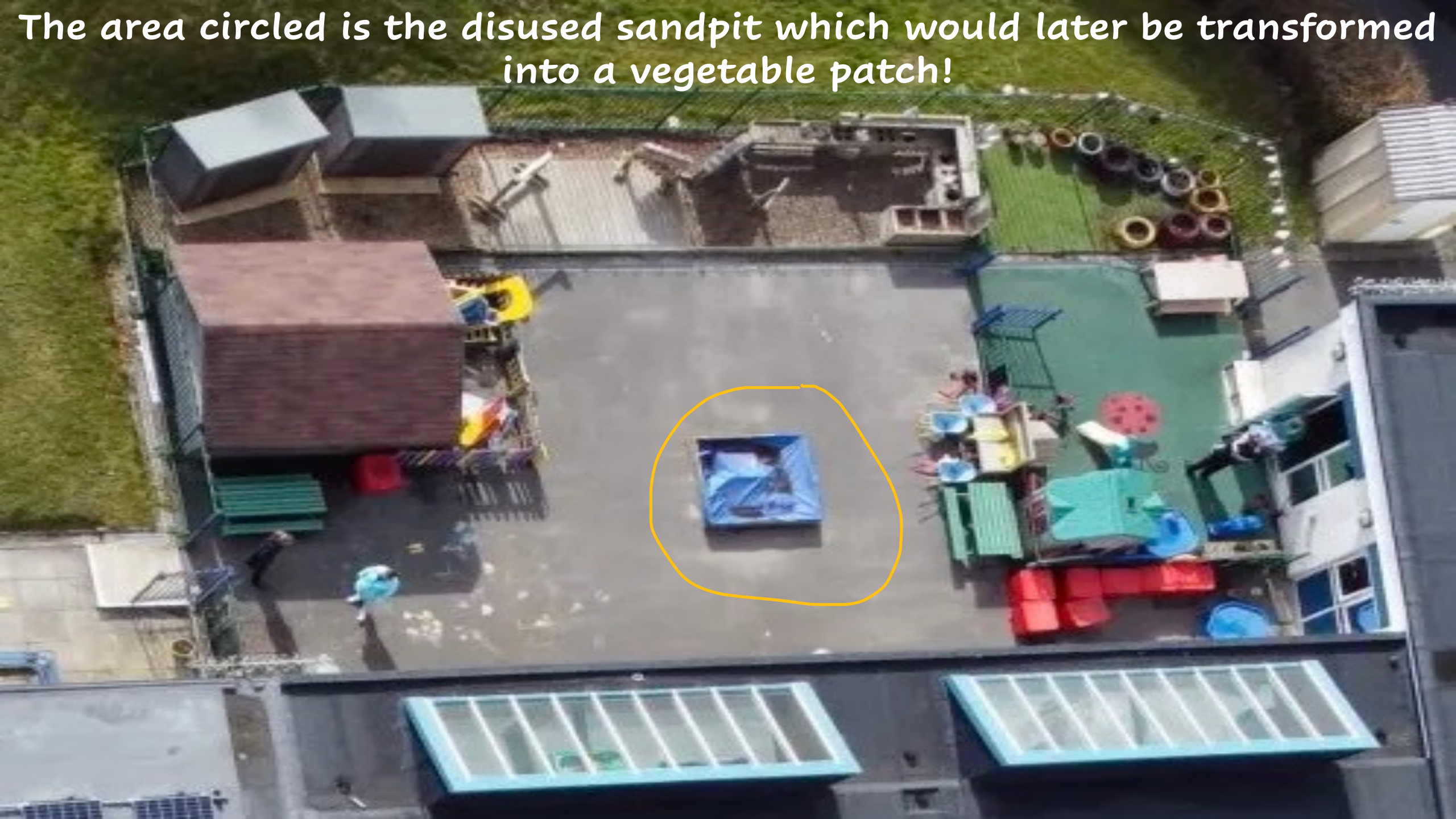


Explore:

In the setting in which I work, the small yard was quite scruffy and bare. It was a small area which was used for the children to play in but there was not a single plant growing in it, other than weeds. It looked very unkempt to anyone visiting the school and seemed such a waste of space. I knew that something had to be done for the area to be more welcoming and habitable. I decided to empty the sandpit which was no longer in use, and turn it into a vegetable patch. This way, I could teach the children the importance of growing your own vegetables, as well as healthy eating and preserving the environment.



The area circled is the disused sandpit which would later be transformed into a vegetable patch!



Why is it important to change the area?

I want to ensure that the children in my care, learn about the importance of taking care of the environment so that in the future, they carry on to do so and teach their children about this. I think that by the children planting, growing and eating their own vegetables, it will help them to learn about healthy eating and where food comes from. It is also important to preserve the area and introduce plants for the children, as well as wildlife and insects which may live or visit the area.


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Conserve

I decided to plant potatoes, garlic, sweetcorn, carrots, strawberries, raspberries and various herbs. I believe that these are quite easy fruit and vegetables to grow with the children in my care, which will hopefully give them and their families inspiration to grow plants, fruit and vegetables in their own gardens, if possible.



Flowers

I also decided to plant sunflowers as these are big and colourful which the children will enjoy. They will also attract a lot of insects to the area which will be great for conservation. Since planting the sunflowers, the parents have noticed and asked about them. The parents have mentioned that they are enjoying watching them grow and that they feel inspired to plant sunflowers in their gardens too.



More flowers...

I planted flowers for the bees and to brighten up a very dull area. They added a pop of colour to the outdoor area and the children asked a lot of questions about the flowers which gave me the opportunity to talk about life cycles and pollination. I learnt that flowers should only be watered early in the morning and late at night, not to burn their leaves in the sun.





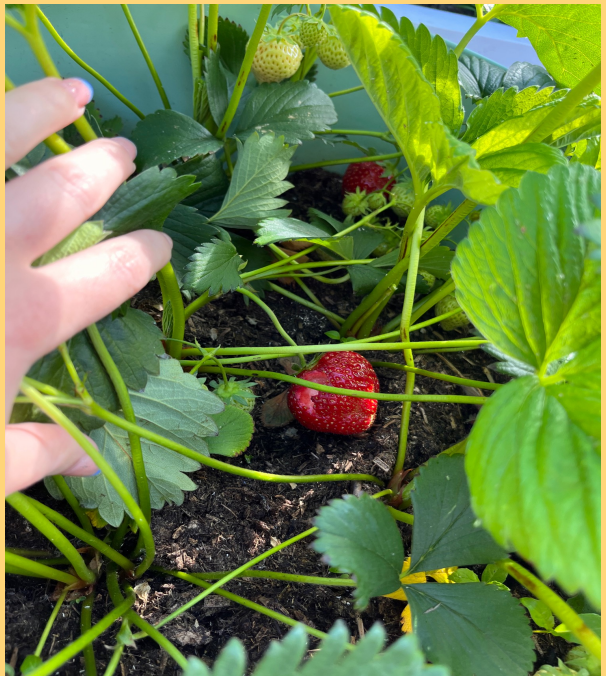


The Bug Hotel

A bug hotel was standing tall in the outdoor area. I carried out research on the best place to put the bug hotel and found out through the Woodland Trust that it is in the sunlight.
I could see quite a few minibeasts inside the bug hotel, hiding from predators such as birds. I have noticed that more and more minibeasts are inhabiting the bug hotel and the children enjoy checking daily which minibeasts they can see.

The Vegetable Patch

The vegetable patch has grown really well as we have had lots of sunshine and rain which has helped. The children have been really excited to try the fruit and vegetables which have grown. We have been checking daily to see what has grown so far and we have noticed how fast the strawberries have grown! Even a few slugs and insects have enjoyed them!







Garlic





Potatoes

Raspberries



Reflection

Since completing The John Muir Award, I have learnt the importance of nature and how it is vital to look after the world in which we live in. I have also learnt to stop and listen to the birds and appreciate the flowers in the garden. As I have got older, life has become very busy, and I always feel that I am rushing around and haven't got time to properly relax.

Now I make sure that I sit in the garden and take in the fresh air and admire the birds and the bees around me. I will make sure that I will grow my own fruit and vegetables as well as plant as many plants as I can for the bees and other insects. I will also make sure that I put bird feeders around my garden. I feel inspired to be at one with nature and to promote sustainability in the environment.







“It’s surely our responsibility to do everything within our power to create a planet that provides a home not just for us, but for all life on Earth.”

David Attenborough