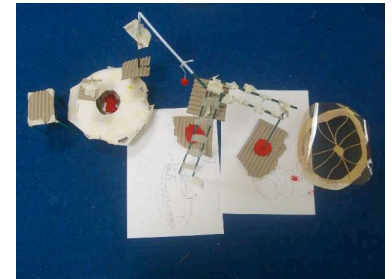


**BUTTS FIELD PLAY SPACE
EAST BRIDGFORD**

**CONSULTATION REPORT AND
DESIGN BRIEF**



JUNE 2008



1 BACKGROUND

This report has been commissioned by the East Bridgford Parish Council and prepared by *learning-space*. The brief for the report was to:

- Produce a Stakeholder Report reflecting consultation workshop outputs
- Suggest core priority areas for the play space
- Provide Design Guidelines to be used to brief tendering Design Teams

The current play facilities on Butts Field are limited in their play value and in a poor state of repair. The Parish Council are bidding for funds to completely renew these facilities and develop a play area that is creative about play, as well as being sustainable. The focus is on play opportunities for Under 12s, however there is a complementary need to address provision for 13-19 year olds, who previously had a separate skate park area, before equipment became hazardous.

2 CONSULTATION

Consultation undertaken to inform this report in 2007, previous to the appointment of *learning-space* includes:

- Work over several weeks by the class teacher with Year 3 pupils from St Peter's Primary School
- A questionnaire prepared by the Year 3 pupils and sent to families of children in the school, which produced 94 responses
- An Open Day and exhibition on the Butts Field Play area

Additional consultation undertaken by *learning-space* in May and June 2008 includes:

- A workshop with Year 6 pupils from St Peter's Primary School
- Discussions and feedback from Year 3 pupils at St Peter's Primary School
- A public meeting attended by 14 adults and 4 under 16s
- Interactive discussions with 8-14 year olds at the Village Fair potted sports and school disco evening
- Group discussions with mothers from the Mothers and Toddlers group
- Discussions with the village Pre School

A number of common themes emerged from this consultation:

- The existing play space is popular and well located, but is in much need of improvement
- There is a lack of suitable provision for teenagers
- There is a lack of suitable provision for very young children
- Children identified a wish for active adventurous play opportunities – climbing, swinging, chasing, hiding, den building etc.

- There was an identified need for social/ hanging out space – for children, teenagers and families.
- Children felt that familiarity/ repeated use of play areas can quickly make them boring. To avoid this they expressed desire for risk and challenge, and for equipment/ facilities that allowed for multiple and imaginative ways to reinvent new ways to play on and around them
- Younger children need an area which is safe and appropriate to their age, and in which it is easy for parents/ carers to supervise their play
- There was a general consensus about the value of ‘natural’ elements as a focus for play – trees, boulders, grass slopes, puddles, streams, mud, sand etc
- There were requests for a wide range of equipment (obstacle courses, zip wires, tree houses, bridges, roundabout etc), but the most consistently requested pieces of play equipment were swings and slides

For full details of consultation see Appendix 1

3 STRATEGIC BRIEF

3.1 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

From the findings of the consultation, and current thinking about best practice in the provision of play space and play opportunities, we would propose the following key design principles.

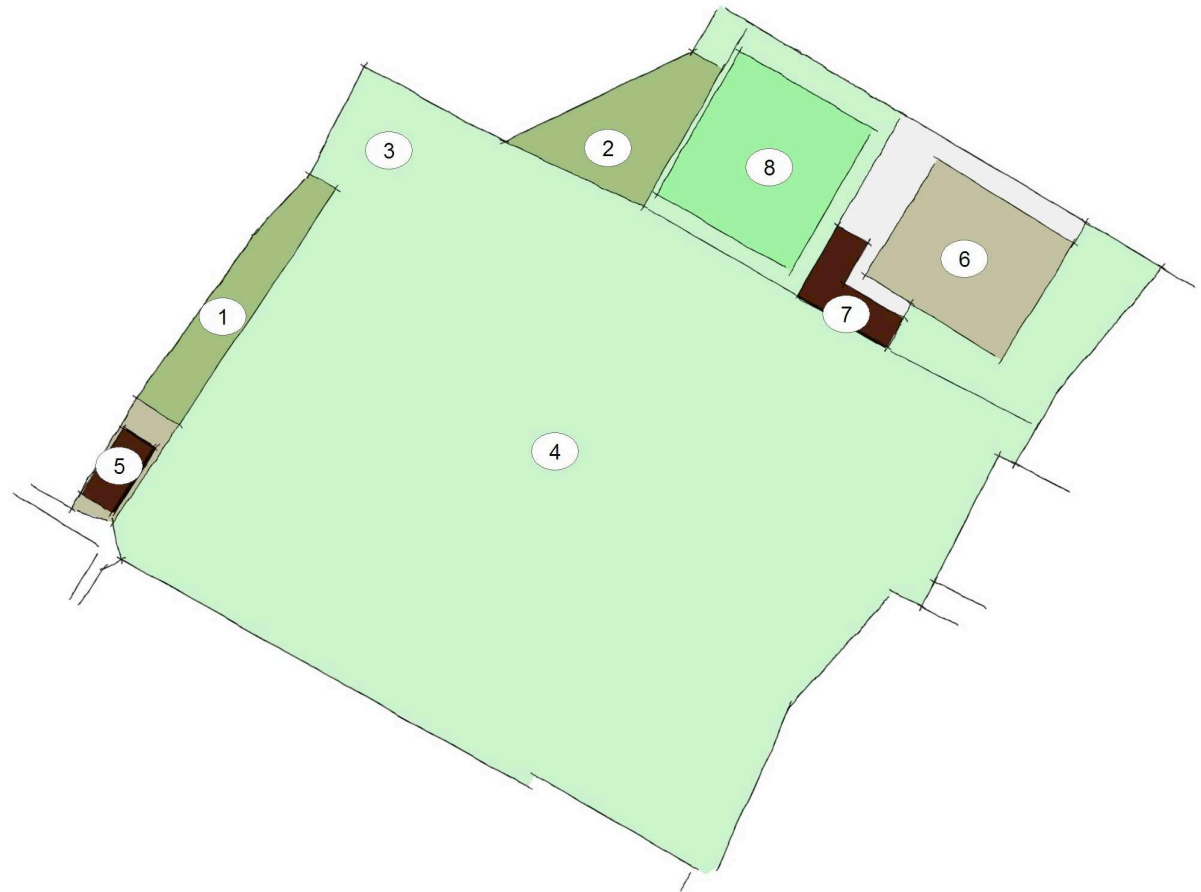
- Age appropriate areas, but not age segregated
- Use of natural landscape elements – boulders, tree trunks, grass mounds etc - for creative, imaginative play, climbing, hiding, balance, chasing, role play etc
- Fixed/ manufactured equipment to be made from sustainably sourced timber where appropriate, and designed to accommodate multiple play opportunities/ imaginative play
- Play provision and equipment that allows for some risk taking, and extended challenge as a child’s skills/ abilities/ confidence develop
- Where possible, use of natural surfacing - limiting tarmac/ rubberised safety surfaces to where absolutely necessary
- Equipment should be provided to facilitate use by disabled children where possible (eg basket swing, wide slide etc)

3.2 SITE CONTEXT: EXISTING SITE

The existing play park (1) is a thin strip with a selection of isolated pieces of play equipment in a linear arrangement. It is bounded on the north west side by mature trees/ hedging, on the south west side by the small external play area of the Pre School (5), and along the remaining 2 sides by a low fence. In the corner of the field to the north of the play park (3) there is a basketball hoop. A triangle of trees (2) contains the remains of a small skate park provision. The area available for the play area is constrained by the sports uses on the field (4) – football pitches, cricket pitch etc.

Behind the sports pavilion (7) are tennis courts and a bowling green. The verandah of the sports pavilion is the main space where teenagers hang out in the evening

The whole field is flat. It is unusual in that it is a 'backlands' site, bounded by back gardens with mature planting, and therefore virtually no casual surveillance



3.3 STRATEGIC SITE BRIEF

Proposals for a strategic site brief include:

- Remodelling of the play area, using organic forms, landforms etc to form an adventurous play area linked organically (no fences) and as an extension (for chasing/ hiding games etc) to the sports field.
- Working with the linear nature of the available site, integrating the different elements of the play area with a strong theme (an example could be a dry river bed, with bridges over, 'culvert' tunnels, stepping stones, rain formed puddles, a 'beach' etc.) Play equipment sited in and around this area could be specified to reinforce the play possibilities of this theme.
- Providing a toddlers' play area adjacent to the Pre-School. This area to have natural enclosure – grass mounds, timber retaining wall, boulders etc to give easier supervision of young children, at the same time as providing play opportunities for older children and natural places to sit and socialise. Use of multi sensory natural textures and surfaces as well as hard surfaces for trikes/ bikes etc. Use of slopes/ steps and levels for exploratory play. Appropriately sized swing and slide/ other equipment. Consideration of water feature, possibly solar powered or hand pump for small scale water play



- Provision of a play area with ramps/ jumps etc for skateboards/ bikes – but designed to also accommodate climbing, running up, rolling down etc. Consideration of a shelter adjacent to this area, but in a position where it is in full view to discourage anti-social activities. Provision of this shelter could be a participative arts/ artist based project working with local teenagers
- Adaptation of the triangle of trees to form a natural ‘wild’ play area, with logs, branches, leaves etc for den building.
- Provision of seating areas (by use of landscape elements where possible) for children to socialise, for parents/ carers to sit when supervising their children, and for families/ friends to gather for picnics etc
- Consideration of low level, unobtrusive lighting – possibly solar powered – to extend the hours of use of the play area

3.4 ACCESS

Proposals should consider the access needs of all users and take account of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. It would not be expected that all parts of the play area would be accessible to all users, but careful design of landscaping/ surfaces and specification of equipment can ensure that there is provision for people (parents/carers as well as children) of differing abilities.

3.5 RISK

It is recognised that fear of litigation is having an increasing impact on the provision of play spaces for children, and that this can have negative effects on the play choices available to children, limiting their enjoyment and causing potentially damaging consequences for their development. A sensible approach to this, making use of Play Safety Forum’s Managing Risk in Play Provision Statement, should ensure an appropriate balance between measured risk and the requirements to cover the Parish Council’s liabilities. It will be the designers responsibility to carry out a full risk assessment of the proposed play area.

3.6 MAINTENANCE

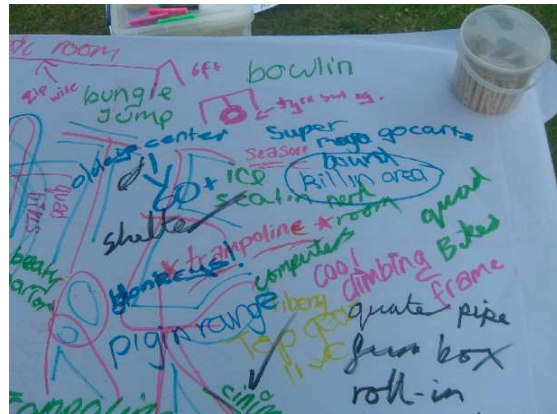
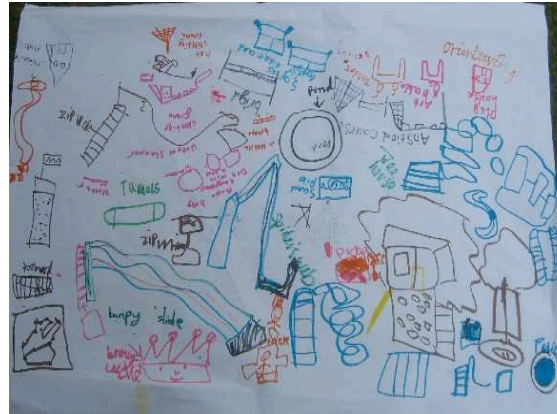
The design of the proposed play area will have to be easy to maintain. A more natural environment is likely to require different maintenance regimes (but not necessarily more expensive) to the more traditional fixed equipment, fencing and safety surfacing to many play areas. The designer will provide guidance on an appropriate maintenance programme, and indications of potential costs.

APPENDIX 1: DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

3.7 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION

DATE	GROUP	METHODOLOGY	NUMBERS	AGES	
				CHILDREN	ADULTS
27/6/08	Open day	Group discussion/ drawing	25	8 - 14	
23/6/08	Open public meeting	Workshop/ discussion	14		21+
			4	11-16	
6/6/08	Mothers and Toddlers	Interview/ conversations	6		21+
22/5/08	St Peter's School: Year 3 pupils	Group discussion	25	7-8	
22/5/08	Pre School	Interview/ discussion	2		21+
20/5/08	St Peter's School: Year 6 pupils	Workshop / games	20	10-11	
April 2008	Mothers and Toddlers	Interview/ conversations	14		21+
29/9/2007	Open day	Interview/ discussion	13		21+
			4	Under 16	
March 2007	Families of children at St Peter's School	Questionnaire	94	Family responses	
March 2007	St Peter's School: Year 3 pupils	Curriculum project	25	7-8	

3.8 VILLAGE FAIR CONSULTATION



Consultation on the eve of the village fair, when children and families come for the school disco in a marquee on Butts Field, and potted sports ‘taster’ activities organised by the village sports club, with a barbecue and a bar. Consultation supported by 3 Year 6 children from St Peters School Over a period of about an hour and a half, had conversations and ideas from 25 children aged between about 8 and 14.

Common themes that emerged included:

- Climbing - climbing wall, spiders web, climbing frame
- Places for imaginary play – treehouses, dens, tunnels etc
- Swings – all types including tyre swings
- Sliding – all types including bumpy slides, tunnel slides, racing slides, spiral slides, zip wire.....
- Obstacle course – bridges, wobbly bridges
- Skating/ bike riding provision inc half pipes etc.....
- Social/ hanging out space – seating, shelter.....
- Bouncing – trampoline, bungy...

3.9 PUBLIC MEETING NOTES: 23/6/2008

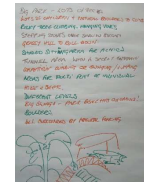
Attendance:

Amanda Waring, Clare Van Loenen, John Turner, Norman Hall, Garth Powell, James Adams, Charlie Sharpe, Sam, George Carlin, Sophie Burrell, Roz Howie, Emma Sharpe, Paul Bancroft, Dianne Perry, Julie Marston, Sarah Yarnell-Walker, David Atkins, Peter Taffs

3.9.1 THE PLAY AREA WE WOULD LIKE

GROUP 1

Big park, lots of trees, lots of children and natural boulders to climb. Risky tree climbing, hanging vines. Stepping stones over shallow stream, grassy hill to roll down. Shaded sitting area for picnics. Tunnel area with a secret entrance. Competitive climbing or swinging/ jumping. Areas for multi play or individual. Hide and seek. Different levels. Big swings – park benches on chains! Boulders. All surrounded by natural fencing



GROUP 2

Equipment that's suitable to 'bridge' variety of ages – eg basketball/ football enclosure (like West Bridgford Park)
Equipment that encourages us of imagination – not too contrived

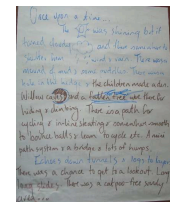
GROUP 3

Once upon a time....the sun was shining but it turned cloudy and there was somewhere to shelter from the wind and rain. There was a mound of mud and some puddles. There was a hole in the hedge and the children made a den. Willow caves and a fallen tree were there for hiding and climbing. There is a path for cycling and in-line skating and somewhere smooth to bounce balls and learn to cycle. A mini path system and a bridge and lots of humps.

Echoes down tunnels and logs to layer. There was a chance to get to a look out. Long, long slides. There was a cat poo free sandy area....

The balance of risk and safety is a real issue. Current equipment is pretty dangerous. Low trampolines are great fun. Pulley system. Swings to enjoy with friends or tyre swings. Also chatting on roundabout.

Chance to be sociable and have safe spaces. There will be a youth bus calling regularly. Chance to play with different aged



children..... Anything is better than nothing. Sculptures to sit on and 'monster' or creative features. Swings are great!
Slides....Sensory equipment influenced by weather and can be played with...

GROUP 4

(Under 16s – Charlie, Sam, George, James)

Versatile hard surface for a variety of ball games. Goal and hoops

Variety.

Social space/ somewhere to chill where you won't disturb people – covered. Visible – to discourage anti-social behaviour/ vandalism. Near skate park – part of open space

Space to run around/ kick a ball.

This group would be keen to help design the facilities



3.10 MOTHERS AND TODDLERS: 6/6/08

Discussion with Anna (Mums and Toddlers group leader) and 6 mothers (mums to a total of 15 children aged between 3.5 months and 13 years old)

Generally used the play space quite a lot (not all) but felt it was poor, had inappropriate/ poor equipment and needed lots of improvement

Must haves:

Slide – but needs to be wide enough to access steps and use with child. Could be integrated into landscaped slope

Swings – but think about zoning for safety of younger children.

Would like to see:

- Somewhere for teenagers to hang out
- Tree(s) for climbing – disappointed that a tree that had been used for climbing has been pruned so no longer climbable
- Zip wire
- Use made of the area of the field with trees next to the bowling green as a more ‘natural’ play area with dens/ hiding places etc
- Rubberized safety surface (with shapes/ markings for imaginative play) popular with some
- Sand/ natural softer surfaces integrated with equipment/ landscape features more popular with others
- Equipment / features that are open to a wide variety of uses/ wide variety of ages
- Space for running/ chasing/ hiding games
- Picnic table(s) / places to sit and socialize while still watching the play area(in the sun and in the shade)
- Some liked bright colours, others more natural
- Water play possibilities – could be natural – dishes or hollows to collect rainwater and form puddles, or purpose made, eg hand pumps
- Opportunities for challenge (all ages) and risk
- Climbing wall

3.11 PRE SCHOOL: 22/5/08

Discussion with Annette Taylor (Pre School), Clare Van Loenen (parent) and John Mitchell (learning-space)

The Pre School would like to see age appropriate play space directly accessible from their small outside space. The space would be publicly accessible at all times, and shared by the Pre School during school hours.

Ideas for this play space:

- Age appropriate (pre school/ toddlers)
- Enclosed for ease of supervision – but could be mounded/ landscaped enclosure instead of fence (offering additional play/ social opportunities)
- Natural textures/ sensory/ touchy-feely surfaces/ materials (eg gravel) and ground modelling for creative/ imaginative play opportunities
- Spaces for imaginative/ role play
- Use of natural elements (eg logs) for sitting/ climbing/ exploring
- Age appropriate physical challenge – balance, climbing, stepping stones
- Some form of shade/ shelter (eg sails) giving spaces under cover for children to play and for parents to sit
- Avoid sand – too difficult to manage/ maintain
- Basket swing
- Explore possibilities for small scale flowing water features – eg water bubbling over rock, flat ground surface with bubbling outlets. Possibility of solar powered operation with time switch. Seasonal cut off (frost protection) could be managed by Pre School
- Small scale contoured looped path/ figure of 8 for trikes etc
- Some lighting to extend hours of use in winter. Low level/ built in – not street/ floodlighting. Explore possibility of solar powered

Annette will have further discussion with parents, and will talk to children about their ideas over the next week

3.12 ST PETER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, YEAR 3 CLASS: 22/5/08

3.12.1 WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE ON THE PARK

- Climbing frame
- Climbing wall
- Obstacle course (with different ways to use it)
- Monkey bars
- Rocket with buttons that flash
- Helter skelter/ swirly slide
- Baby trampoline
- Play castle/ fort
- Babies play area
- Soft surfaces
- Grass
- Wobbly bridge
- Bouncy roundabout
- Rotating dizzy thing
- Table for mums and babies
- Rest place
- See saw
- Swings
- Balls to play with
- Card games
- Go kart and track
- Bouncy castle
- Table tennis
- Water pistols and space to run around
- Water slide
- Fun bins
- Skate board ramp
- Refreshments shop/ kiosk

FURTHER DISCUSSION

- Spaces needed for tig/ hiding/ chasing games. Simple markings on the floor (lines/ chequers etc) can support/ facilitate an endless variety of different games. Trees / natural features as well as pieces of equipment can be used as places to hide for hiding games. Equipment designed and placed appropriately can support hiding/ chasing games as well as its designed use
- All equipment needs to have opportunities to be used in different ways and to provide new challenges to avoid it becoming boring

3.13 ST PETER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, YEAR 6 CLASS: 20/5/08

3.13.1 OUR FAVOURITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Favourite outside activities include:

- Climbing trees, Climbing wall, Hose riding, Bike riding, Football, Netball, Tennis, Basketball, Dog Walking, Tig, Skating
- More than half the group regularly use the park independently - on their own or with friends

3.13.2 FURTHER THOUGHTS

Natural areas are favourite places for play:

- The beach – digging, making sandcastles, rockpooling/ nature, water play, swimming.....
- Forests – climbing trees, hide and seek, tracker game, tig, treehouses

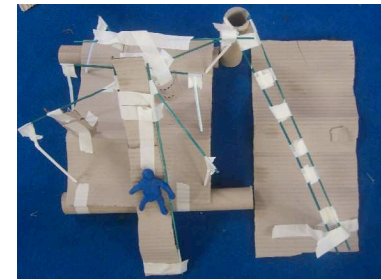
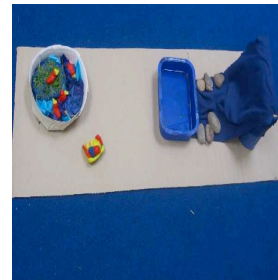
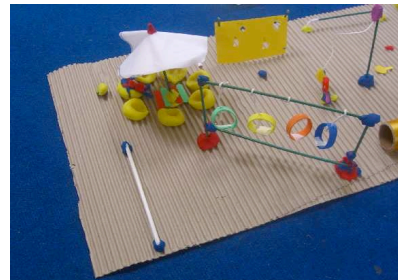
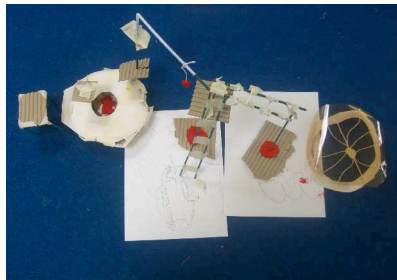
The most popular addition to the play area would be a trampoline

3.13.3 IMAGININGS: HOW WE IMAGINED OUR NEW PLAY AREA

- A tree house to sit and talk in
- Racing friends on spider webs
- A jungle gym
- Trim trail
- Sports area
- Swings
- Assault course
- Climbing trees
- Sitting in the shade, on a bench, talking to friends
- Bike track
- Pond
- Ladder, platform and swing
- Pet corner
- Playing with friends on bikes
- Covered slide – glow in the dark
- Playing street hockey

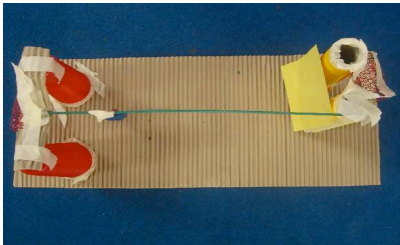


3.13.4 MAKING OUR PLAY SPACE



ASSAULT COURSE 1

Ladder, zip wire, pit of balls, monkey bars, trampoline – all organised to give many different ways to move around and play imaginatively

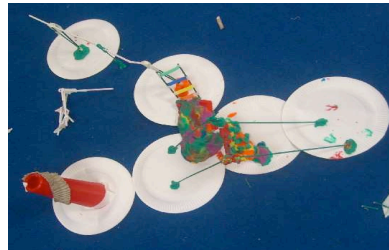


ZIP WIRE

Ladder and platform to top, sponge landing area, slide to ground

ASSAULT COURSE / TRIM TRAIL

Series of separate but connected pieces of equipment including gym bars, tunnel, hanging tyres, football aiming goal, stepping stones, balance bar/ bench and seating area with parasol



JUNGLE GYM

Climbing wall, zip wire, helter skelter – all in different colours. Hill with ball to roll down inside

WATER PARADISE

An area to picnic, relax and talk to friends with a bench, a pond with ducks and a waterfall to paddle in

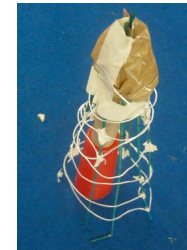


JUNGLE GYM

Climbing wall, zip wire, monkey bars, steep vertical slide

JUNGLE GYM

Start anywhere, ladder, monkey bars, hanging ball to swing on/ hit, trampoline safety net, climbing wall, wobbly slide. Can be used for many different games including tig



SPIDER WEB

Climb, play, chase on spider web, ladder inside central column to climb to the top and look out

SOME IMPORTANT POINTS DISCUSSED ABOUT ALL IDEAS

- Facilities in the play area need to provide risks and challenge – without this they will quickly become boring.
- Each piece of equipment/ area of play park needs to provide possibilities for a wide and varying range of ways to use it – scope for imaginative reinterpretation, different types of games– individual, group and team, social/ hanging out options – different uses by different ages. Without these multiple possibilities it will soon become boring.