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Eastwick Infant School expands outdoor learning area with equipment Dedicated to a former teacher

By Tom Van Klaveren



A WOODEN VW Camper Van, dedicated to the memory of a former teacher, is the highlight of Eastwick Infant School's upgraded outdoor playground. The update includes an upgrade of the covered areas which offer protection from the elements and a mud-kitchen, which teachers hope will encourage independent learning in the fresh air.

The specially-designed timber equipment also includes the play camper van dedicated to the memory of Gill Emsley a former teacher at the school who died last year.

Mrs Emsley, who taught at the school between 1982 and 2006, had a passion for literacy and a new reflective garden and story-telling chair have also been installed to reflect that.

With the new equipment proving extremely popular with both staff and pupils, the staff are hopeful they will provide a tribute and facility for years to come.

Cathy Liversidge, co-chair of the Friends of Eastwick Infant School said: "These fantastic facilities are already benefiting the children at Eastwick Infants and will continue to add to the richness of outdoor learning there for many years to come.

"The outdoor classroom area is considered an essential part of the Early Years provision at Eastwick and enables the school to celebrate and develop the children's learning outside, on a big scale."

The school's three Reception classes share the new space with the children from the Special Educational Needs centre. Mrs Liversidge said the arrangement allows the youngsters to "build relationships with other children and adults across the whole year group."

All of the equipment is also used for "forest school" sessions, where Reception children learn new outdoor skills in a natural environment.

The new upgraded covered areas mean the children can now use the sandpit, a large chalkboard for outdoor writing, skittles, balancing beams and scooters every day, whatever the weather.

