

Where the Wildings Are! Design for Bowerham School



Bowerham School is looking forward to getting involved in a variety of activities which will help investigate how the school grounds are currently used and how they can improve this.

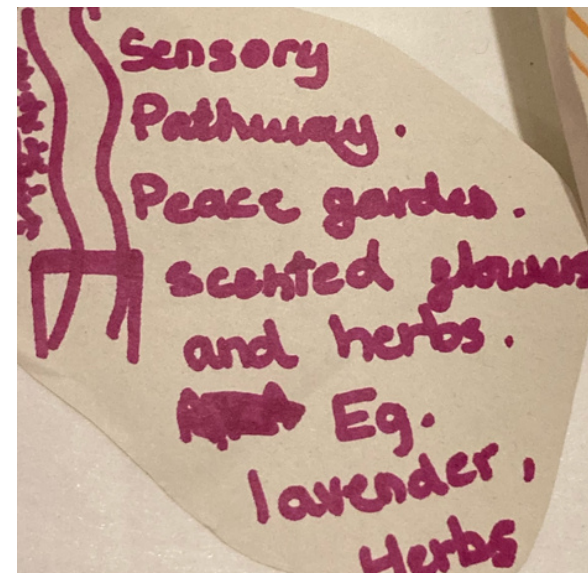
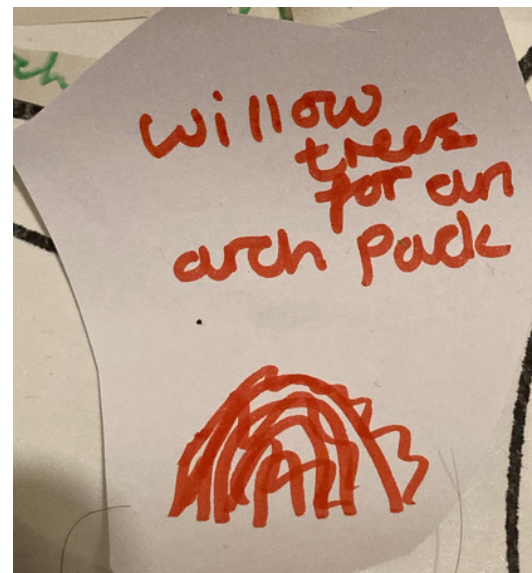
Their aim is to improve the grounds for wildlife and growing food, alongside increasing opportunities for outdoor learning.

Based on the children's suggestions at our design sessions (see right), as well as the teachers' feelings about the space, our suggestions centre around the following ideas:

- Planting more fruit trees in the grounds
- Giving each class its own raised bed to grow in
- Providing more quiet sensory spaces for quiet play, reading and wellbeing
- Developing a community garden area for the school to use
- Enhancing opportunities for wildlife and nature play

The children's wish list

- Fruit trees
- Bird feeders
- Bird bath
- Sensory garden
- Pond
- Willow arch
- Bat boxes
- Allotment area
- Strawberries
- Bug hotels
- Scented flowers





Where the Wildings Are!

A new community garden for the front of the school



Bowerham currently has a large, open sunny area adjacent to the car park which is accessed from Bowerham Road (see image left). The school would like this area to be a community garden which staff and pupils can also use. The design that we have developed for the space, which is shown on the following page, tries to incorporate some of the pupils' requests for more wildlife friendly and sensory planting, as well as enhanced nature play opportunities. Our intention is that the space could also be used for small group work or quieter, one to one, teacher pupil interactions outside of the classroom, which may be especially useful for SEN pupils.

Sample Plant list

- Buddleia
- Achillea
- Sedum
- Chives
- Aquilegia
- Nasturtium
- Primrose
- Hostas
- Astilbe
- Euonymous





Where the Wildings Are!

A new community garden for the front of the school

Planted borders

The children wanted colourful, wildlife friendly plants like those listed on the previous page to make up the planting inside the garden.

Woodchip path

The path running through the garden, both seating areas and the inside of the willow tunnel can be created from wood chip.



Willow tunnel for play

A willow tunnel with entrance arches forms a play structure and acts as a secluded border for the garden.

Seating pockets

Inside the garden area, two circular seating pods have been created amongst the planting for staff and pupils to enjoy the quiet and wildlife. One is located to catch the morning sun and one the afternoon sun.



Where the Wildings Are!

A new orchard for the school



Bowerham has asked for each class to be able to plant a tree along the perimeter of the school fence so that they can watch it grow. We think this is a great idea as the fence is mostly in a nice sunny spot where trees should do well.

As the school does not have fruit trees currently, we would recommend planting apples along the full length of the fence as shown on the aerial photo below right. This will provide a good crop of fruit in time while also leaving the banks free for play and seating.

To provide extra habitat for wildlife, the grass in between the trees could be seeded with wildflower mix and left to grow long.



Trim Trail Area



Bowerham is lucky to have a wooded trim trail area at the back of the school. However, the school would like more trees planted in this area. Our suggestion is that this area could be enhanced further for outdoor play, learning and wildlife with the addition of the features listed on the right and pictured below.

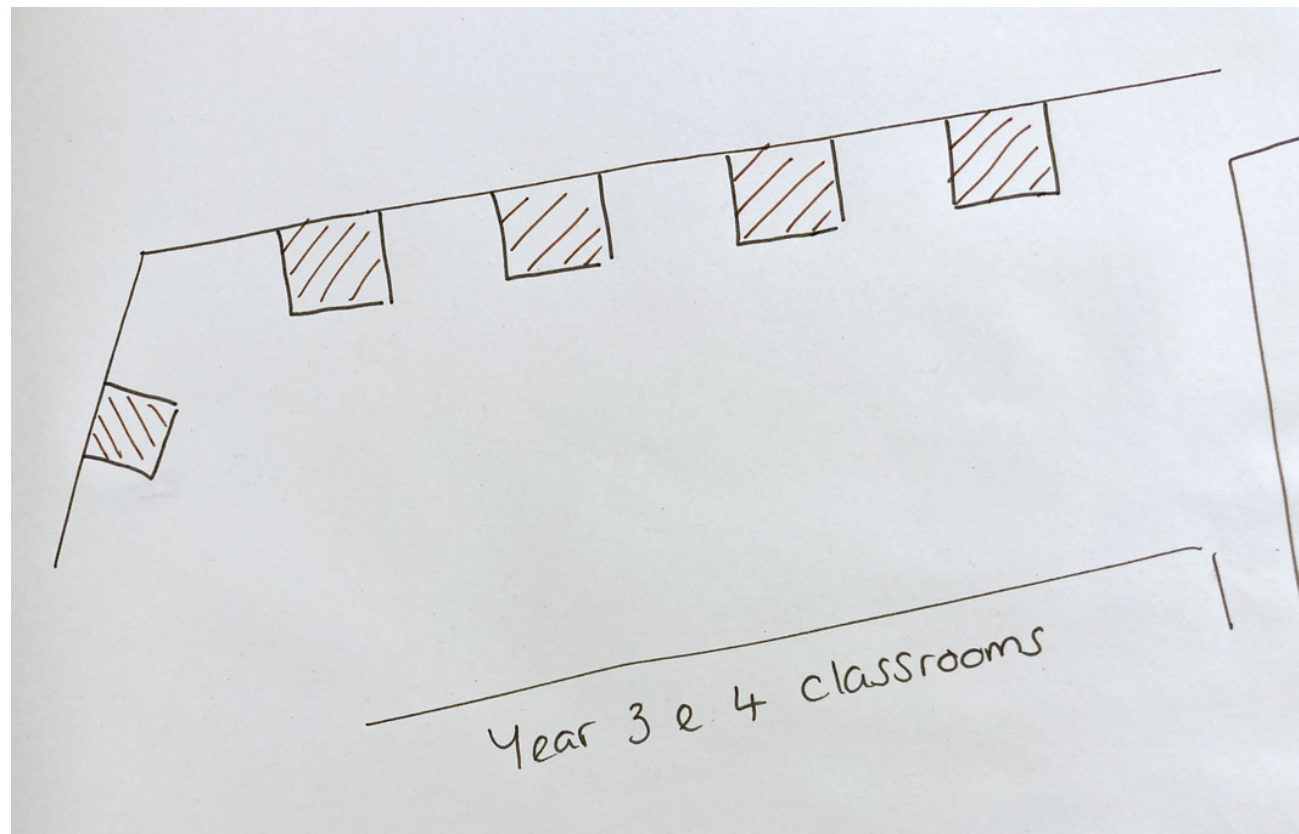


- Things to add**
- More woodland trees
 - Concrete firepit for easy forest school activities
 - Bug hotels
 - Bird and bat boxes
 - Freestanding logs and sticks for the children to use for creative play and den building.
 - Natural musical instruments

Growing beds for each year group



While Bowerham has lots of green space surrounding the school, the main KS2 playground is directly South facing and has no shade or greenery. The staff and pupils also wanted an accessible growing space with each year group having its own raised bed. We have several suggestions which could make this dream a reality, as shown in the following pages.



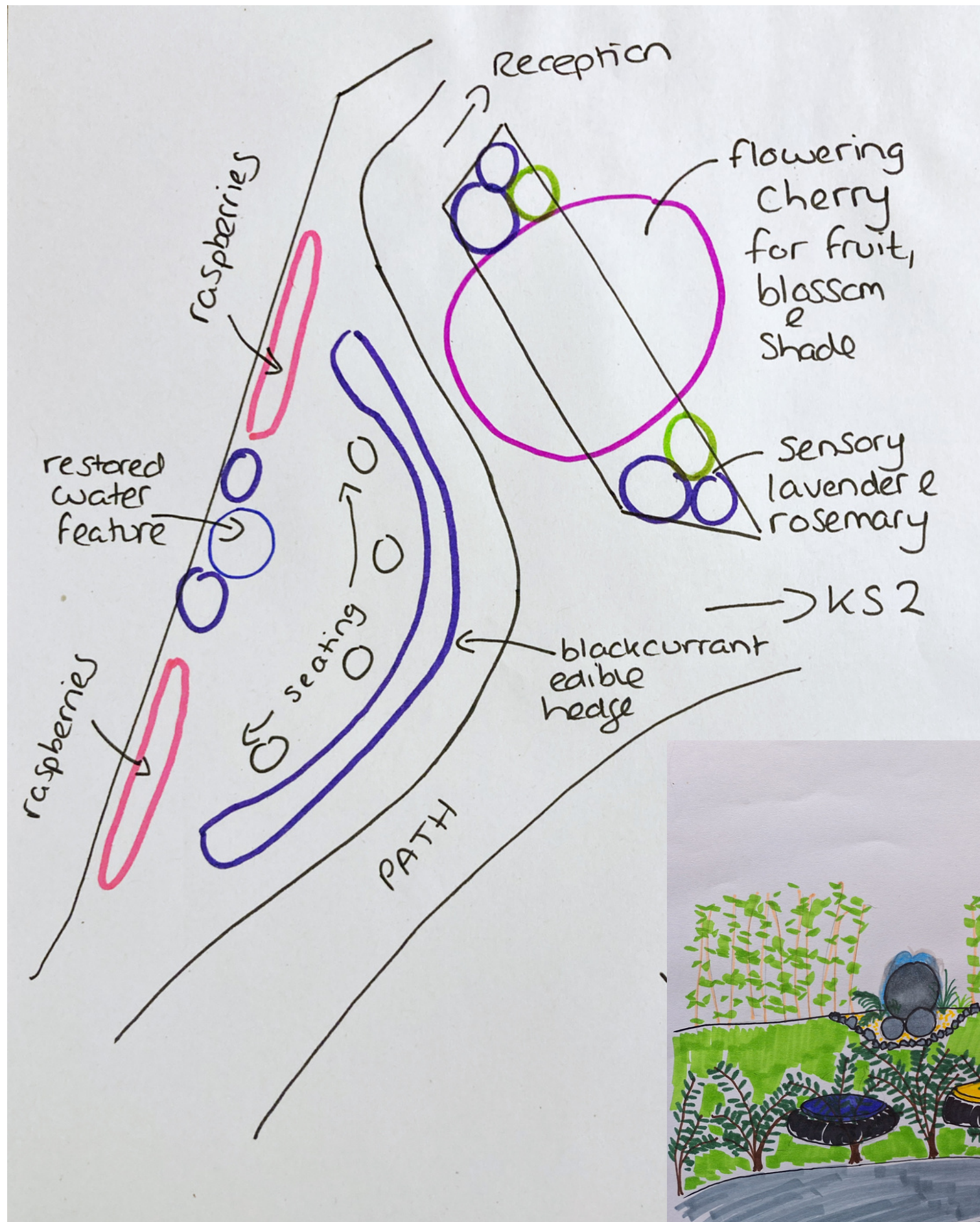
As suggested by the school, each year group could be given its own raised bed in the KS2 playground, the edge of which could double as seating for the pupils. A diagram is shown on the left and example plants to grow are shown below and right. These plants have been grown based on the children's favourites and an easy mix of annual and perennial crops. We would also suggest adding water butts to the downpipes in the playground so that the children can easily water the plants during break time.

Plants to grow

- Alpine strawberries
- Oregano
- Chives
- Nasturtiums
- Perennial kale
- For the sunny wall we'd recommend passion flower and clematis tangutica. Both are non toxic to humans and great for wildlife.



Secret sensory garden



To enhance the plans for the KS2 playground further, we suggest making the most of the small green area at the edge of the existing playground and transforming this into a secret sensory garden - an all edible oasis of calm where pupils and staff can get some shade, quiet and a healthy snack away from the hustle and bustle of the main playground. Our ideas for the space are shown on the left. At their centre would be a restored water feature.

