

Gripple Community Project 2016



This year our chosen charity to support is Woolley Wood School, in Sheffield. Woolley Wood is a small primary special school for children with severe and complex learning difficulties and disabilities.

A chance meeting between Gripple Chairman, Hugh Facey, and Ann Kilby, Chair of Governors, at Woolley Wood School, led to the Gripple Charities Team wanting to find out more about this very special school. Our first meeting was with the inspiring headteacher, David Whitehead, and on being shown around the school we were amazed by both the staff and with the facilities the school has to offer. Woolley Wood provides an exceptionally caring, fun, happy and creative environment.

We at Gripple were interested in finding out if there were any areas of the school that we could help improve and we were told that a lack of funding was preventing the school from making much needed improvements to the playground which was dull and uninspiring.

We decided we wanted to help the school by both fundraising for items that we knew were on the school's 'wish list' and by also providing people power to transform the playground.

After much planning the project went ahead in August. The sensory boards that had been made in advance at Gripple were installed, the sensory garden area was created, the floor illustrations and fence were painted, and the bandstand was transformed.

At the start of the new school term in September the playground was officially opened to lots of happy and excited faces from everyone involved. We were pleased to see the children enthusiastically exploring their new surroundings and we were also delighted to hand over the results of all our fundraising efforts and a generous donation from the Facey Family Foundation. We were treated to a very special song and dance performance by the children to celebrate the opening of the playground.

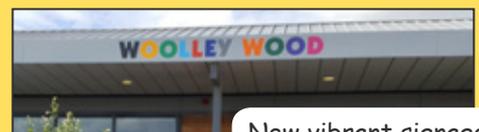


Sensory garden area gives the children the chance to smell, touch and see exciting new experiences



Unwanted items donated by staff at Gripple were made into a series of sensory boards

Lots of large, colourful illustrations were painted onto the floor



New vibrant signage



The 'bandstand' was made weather proof and exciting using colourful PVC covers



What we did....

- Created a sensory garden area which consisted of large planters recycled from ducting. We used plants that would stimulate sight, smell and touch.
- We created a cover for the central 'bandstand'. The area where the school is situated is very elevated and the children are often exposed to the elements. The bandstand now offers a sheltered and creative area for them to play and learn.
- Created six large outdoor sensory boards made from donated items, which were attached at a convenient height so children in wheelchairs or using other mobility aids could easily access them.
- We painted numerous large, colourful illustrations on the floor, including a large aeroplane, the idea for which was taken from a lovely drawing we received from one of the pupils at Woolley Wood School. We also made part of the playground into a large race track which proved very popular and the children really enjoy scooting and manoeuvring around the track.
- Brightened up the wooden sensory garden fence and picnic table and chairs with a coat of paint.

Before the transformation...



Large areas of un-used playground and dull tarmac



The area where the new sensory garden now lies, was drab and not very stimulating for the children



Woolley Wood School is a primary community special school for boys and girls with severe and complex learning difficulties and disabilities. They are part of the Yewlands family of schools and are co-located with Mansel School in the new building.

The school teaches pupils aged from two to ten plus and in September 2016 there were 102 pupils enrolled.

There is a Foundation Stage class which includes the nursery, for pupils aged about two to five, and then six other classes for pupils aged five to eleven years. There are up to 20 pupils in the Foundation Stage per session with a teacher and up to 9 teaching assistants.

Classes 1-8 are very small with up to 11 pupils in each one. In every class there is one teacher and three teaching assistants. Pupils receive a high level of individual attention for their educational and care needs.

About the school....

Special thanks for the time and support given by Ashurst Sheet Metals, Bayton Signs and Mudfords. We would also like to say a huge thank you and well done to our Gripple volunteers and the staff and children at Woolley Wood School.