



## Natural green play spaces and creative play areas

For over 10 years, we have been designing, evolving and creating outdoor spaces for children.

From the first plantings in 1997, it became clear that children have a natural affinity with trees and other plants; and that digging and planting was part of their immediate world. Many of those early plantings are now being used as forest school sites and some of these can be viewed if you click on the [leavesofgreen](#) page on our website.

As those tree planting schemes and wilder landscapes have evolved, it has also become clear that those areas provide a much richer environment for play than areas which just feature play equipment. Our unique, bespoke spaces and gardens encourage natural play-ability and improvised games. It is no surprise if a school remarks that, given a choice, children will always head for the maturing tree planting areas than towards the play equipment.

So we mix play equipment with grassy mounds and mud free hollows; short grass areas with small shelters and enclosures; archways, trails and paths; creative seating; collaborative artwork and sculpture; and trees, bushes, bamboo's and bomb proof herbaceous plants to create a rich landscape to spark physical and imaginative games: running and chasing games, hide and seek, sand play, digging and mud pies, log construction, throwing walls; or gardens and exterior spaces that enhance social activity and create a sense of wellbeing and peaceful awareness.

Of course, there is maintenance to be considered and such areas will be higher maintenance than the standard play equipment schemes. However, taken as a whole, replacing old equipment with up to date newer versions cancels out any imbalance.



The advantage of the type of play space that green creates is that in time, these outdoor spaces become much more interactive gardens and landscapes with a sense of place and beauty. Most standard play equipment providers create areas which are, by and large, past their sell-by date in 10 years. That is when our spaces are just beginning to look their best, although from day one the effect is one of positive transformation.

For more detailed and well referenced research into the effects of the natural world on children and young people: [www.whitehutchinson.com](http://www.whitehutchinson.com)



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