



## Active Children - Healthy Children

### Welcome to Woodmancote School

Woodmancote School is based in Woodmancote, Gloucestershire, 3 ½ miles north of Cheltenham. The school was founded in 1972 and originally opened with just 6 classes. Over the years, as the population of the village and surrounding areas has grown, we have expanded to meet the need for school places and now have 420 pupils, spread over 14 classes, as well as a pre-school with 38 children enrolled.

The school employs 24 Teachers and 40 Support Staff. Pre Covid-19 we also had over 15 volunteers coming in each week to help with activities such as listening to children read, outdoor learning, sports after school clubs.

We have a hugely supportive Parent Teacher Association (PTA), who put fantastic efforts into raising additional funds to be used to enhance the children's school experience. Before the pandemic the PTA had an income average of £9000 per year, but over the last 2 years, this has reduced to just above zero. We have historically used funds raised by the PTA to finance projects such as a trim trail, an outdoor gazebo, a large scale clamber frame and the development of the outdoor learning area.

We also enhance our annual budget through the rental of the school premises to external organisations. This usually generates approximately £9000 annually but again, due to Covid-19, this has reduced down to £4000 during the last 12 months.

### The challenges we face as a School

#### The Impact of COVID on the Health and Well-Being of Children

Prior to the COVID Pandemic, Children's mental health and well-being was of concern. However, the pandemic has undoubtedly exasperated the issue. We believe that we have a duty to address some of the issues raised by organisations such as the Children's Society and BBC Children In Need referenced below:

*As decision makers develop guidance and families adapt to the COVID-19 response, the best way to maintain and improve children's levels of well-being is through the 'five ways to well-being'. These five types of activity improve well-being and have been identified using a wide ranging international evidence base. For children and young people, the five ways to well-being are: By aiming to maintain friendships, provide opportunities for physical and creative recreation and support children to continue learning, there is much society at large can do to ensure that the COVID-19 pandemic does not have wide ranging and significant implications for well-being. **The Impact of Covid-19 On Children and Young People Briefing (2021).** Children's Society.*

**Increased emotional wellbeing and mental health challenges:** *the pandemic was impacting on existing mental health and new issues were emerging for children and their parents. Anxiety, fear and stress are particular concerns.*

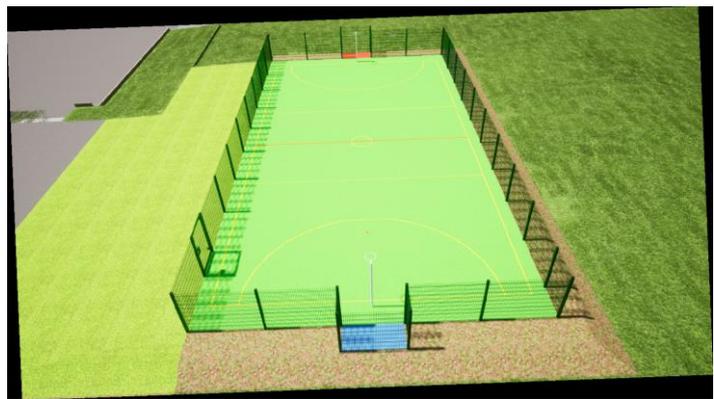
**Risks to physical wellbeing:** *children's physical wellbeing was at risk through reduced nutrition or physical activity for fitness, for those with health conditions, from the pandemic itself. **Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people Early Pandemic Period April - May 2020 (2020).** BBC Children In Need.*

## Overcoming these challenges - The development of an appropriate area for all year round use

To help address some of the issues above we would like to install a Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) within the school grounds.



This will utilise an area of ground that is currently non-developed and not suitable for children to play on, or to use for sports. This ground can be seen in the photograph below, along with a graphic showing the proposed location of the MUGA:



The MUGA will provide a new sports area that can be used by our school children of all ages, whatever the weather. This will be used every day during breaktimes, PE lessons and for after school clubs. A timetable will be put in place to ensure that every child has at least one scheduled time slot to use the MUGA each week.

It will also be used during the summer holiday by our local church, who offer a holiday camp to local vulnerable families. The church is not charged for the use of the school premises for this purpose.

The area of ground where the MUGA will be situated used to house our trim trail that was built over astro turf. This was used by the children throughout the year as the ground was an all weather surface. Unfortunately the trim trail, that was over 10 years old, was condemned during the last play equipment inspection, due to being rotten and unsafe for children to use. As the equipment was beyond repair, we had no choice but to remove it. Shortly after this, the astro turf on the remaining ground was severely damaged during a storm, and also had to be removed for safety reasons. This has left an area of ground that is not in a condition suitable to be used by the children for exercise or for play.

Due to the expansion of our school during recent years, any outdoor space and play equipment that we do have is becoming increasingly crowded by the children during breaktimes. The field can be waterlogged during the winter months so the children are limited to the playground areas for a lot of the year. These factors have an impact on PE lessons too, with many of these having to be carried out in the school hall. A MUGA could be used in all weathers, for PE lessons, breaktimes and afterschool clubs, giving the children more space and opportunity to exercise outside.

Advice from the NHS states that children need to be active for at least 60 minutes a day. Being active also helps with mental health. Evidence shows that children and young people who are more active have more confidence, higher self-esteem, less anxiety and stress, and better social skills – attributes that can help them deal with the challenges they face in daily life. Having a positive attitude towards physical activity has also been associated with children being happier.

## **Intended outcomes of the project**

MUGA surfaces make it possible to provide facilities for multiple sports. Designed to provide optimal playing properties and protection against injuries, they are also hard-wearing, long-lasting and easy to maintain.

The MUGA is designed to last for a minimum of 10 years before any further expenditure on it is required. During this time over 1260 pupils and pre-school children are expected to have been on role at the school and benefited from the facility.

Children will become more active during school time, with less indoor breaktimes and PE lessons. Children will be introduced to a broader range of sports as the area can be used for a whole host of sports in all weathers. This will help develop Children's key physical skills as well as aid their mental health.

During the current Covid-19 pandemic the message from the Government is to limit the amount of time people spend with others indoors. A MUGA helps to achieve this as no PE lessons will need to take place indoors, in areas with limited ventilation.

## Financial Information

The complete cost of the MUGA, grounds works, goal ends and netball posts is £73,695.

We have been able to allocate / raise a large portion of this amount, and are now pursuing the following in order to cover the shortfall:

- Sponsors
- Grants
- Crowdfunding campaign
- Organised fundraising by the children at school

We are not asking for substantial donations, but are hoping that if a number of businesses or organisations offer a small donation then this would help to cover the shortfall.

In return for a donation we will recognise your business or organisation on a specific 'MUGA Sponsors' page on our website, as well a mention on our parents' newsletter. In addition to this, for any donation of £1000 and over, we will put a small 'sponsor plaque' on the MUGA fence which will be seen by parents during school drop off and pick up times.

## Summary

We are looking for funding contributions to assist us in installing a MUGA on waste ground that is currently unusable for children's play or exercise.

The MUGA would give our children the opportunity to participate in a broader range of sports and outdoor activities. This will help them in developing key physical skills and aid their mental health.

We have already raised a substantial amount of the project costs, but are hoping that local businesses and organisations would like to assist us in raising the shortfall. We are hoping that this could be covered by a number of businesses offering a proportion of the shortfall, rather than expecting sizeable contributions.

Visits to the school, to discuss the project further would be very welcome.

If you would like to find out more, or if you would like to donate to this project, please contact [sbm@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:sbm@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk) or telephone Rosie Williams on 01242 674312. Further details, including the detailed project plans can also be found on our website:

<https://woodmancoteschool.co.uk/multi-use-games-area-muga-project/>

***Thank you for your support.***



**Woodmancote School**

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