

Parent Carer Council Head Teacher's Report

Wednesday, 9th September 2026



School Session 2026-27 so far...

- Meet the Teacher
- P7 Lagganlia Camp
- P5 Swimming
- DrEAM About Nature (on Friday)
- Lagganlia Assembly (on Friday)
- Attainment Meetings for whole school



And coming up...



- Going for Gold – Rights Respecting Award – 24th Sept
- Lagganlia February 2028 – P6 begin preparing...
- Parent and Carer Consultations – 1st and 2nd October (Thursday and Friday)
- Hallowe'en Discos – 29th October
- Open Day for new P1 Parents and Carers – Wed, 4th Nov (tbc)
- Autumn Fair – 21st November

And coming up...



- Maths Week from 7th Dec
- P1 Nativity – 11th Dec
- Open Morning and Winter Walkabout – 11th Dec
- End of Term Church Service (P6 Parents and Carers Welcome) – Monday, 14th Dec
- Whole School to the Pantomime! (Wed 16th Dec)
- P7 Nativity Trail (Escape Room!) – 18th Dec

And coming up...

- P7 School Show Thursday, 11th Feb
- World Book Day, 4th March (Turning 30!)
- Parent/Carer Consultations 18th and 19th March
- P7 Spring Assembly in St Columba's (22nd March tbc)



And coming up...



- Wear Your Flair – 30th April
- Energize and Exercise – w/b 17th May
- Sports Day 21st May
- STEaM (Ahead on a Mission) Exhibit – 11th June
- Royal Highland Show – Thursday, 17th June
- Outdoor Assembly – 28th June
- END OF TERM – 29th

Current School Roll

Blackhall currently has a roll of 365 pupils.

Very small drop from last year (from 368) over 14 classes

Average class size is 26 pupils (same as last year).

P1 and P3 stages are full.



Staffing

- We have 2 NQTs this year
 - Jessica Massie, P7;
 - Kateryna Sokolnykova, P5
- Terry (McCutcheon) is back with us.



Staffing – Support Team

- We have 12 PSAs at Blackhall but only 5 with us every day (of these, only 3 are full time)
- PSAs heavily allocated to support individual pupil needs
- A new PSA will be joining our team in the next week or two, Catherine Campbell
- A new Lunchhall Supervisor, Jonas Virsilas will be starting soon.



Budget

- Budget continues to be very tight.
- Finance Committee meeting before October holidays.
- PSA supplementing our Art and Craft supplies.



~~Priorities~~ The direction of focus at Blackhall this year.



- Improving our approach to the teaching of Writing
- Creating “Capable Environments” (from relationships to room design)

Parent/Carer Questions – P4

1. Royal Highland Show Volunteers

- Parent/Carer Volunteers will not be given groups to take on their own. They will have groups of children but will stay with class teacher/a member of staff.
- This should mean the swapping of personal information is not necessary.
- There will be a plan for the day and maps will be available.

2. Homework for P4 (and other stages)

- Homework is not assigned until after the September Weekend. Homework remains consolidation and practice of class learning.



Parent/Carer Questions-P6

- What is the impact of tech in schools?

This is a bigger question than can be answered here but our attainment remains strong so we are not reporting a detrimental effect.



What is Empowered Learning?

Empowered Learning is an Edinburgh City Council programme which provides every learner from P6 to S6 with an iPad. This ensures that high quality digital teaching and learning is accessible to all. This provides endless opportunities for creativity across the curriculum.

Accessibility

Your child can access a range of accessibility tools from their devices including Microsoft Translator and Immersive Reader.

Their devices can be personalised in a way that suits them and each access the range of built-in accessibility features which their iPad contains.

What's in the Box?

Each child is provided with a 10th Generation iPad, charger, and case. Children will be taught how to form positive digital habits with regards to storage, charging and taking full responsibility over the device. It is important that the provided iPad cases are used and remain free of stickers or graffiti.

Available Apps

Children will have access to the Self Service Portal which only contains carefully selected and approved apps which are selected in collaboration with teachers. These apps support creativity, accessibility, and workflow, each having a clear educational purpose.

Digital Learning Across the Curriculum

Digital learning can be incorporated across the curriculum with key strategic uses in Literacy, Numeracy, and other subject areas.

The iPad gives children access to a suite of word processing, presentation, creativity, numeracy, coding, language, music, and research apps.

Home School Agreement and Responsible Use Agreement

You will have received these via your child or the school – either digitally or paper copies. It is essential that these are signed before your child is provided with an iPad.

This may also be a good opportunity to engage with [Internet Matters My Family's Digital Toolkit](#) to support the use of devices at home.

iPad Etiquette

Devices should be charged and ready for school each day. Use the case provided and keep this free from stickers, labels, and graffiti.

Keep iPads away from water bottles. iPads should be in your child's bag when not in use. This should be away from heat and damp.

Frequently Asked Questions

Access the FAQs at the below address to find answers to commonly asked questions.



Parent/Carer Questions – ASN

SfL Groups

It seems [Support for Learning and Nurture groups] haven't started yet for children for this school year. Is there a reason for the delay?

It feels like these groups (particularly nurture group) would be particularly useful at times of transition such as a new school year. Is it also possible to understand what communication the children are given around when these groups will start to set expectations?

Mrs Pearse – SfL Teacher: Planning for SfL interventions takes a bit of time but it is underway. I am currently carrying out Read Write Inc and Fresh Start assessments. This gives me the data to show where each child is at and where to start in each of the programmes.

I hope these will be completed this week and, apart from the RRS assessment looming and needing a lot of my attention, I hope to start my SfL intervention groups next week. I will also be continuing with dyslexia and dyscalculia assessments planned for this term.

Parent/Carer Questions - ASN

Nurture Groups

Mrs Hazel-Dunn and Mrs Deane have been reviewing and reorganising the groups for this session. This includes new referrals and assessment of new pupils.

- This was a planned “pause” while we were developing the new nurture space (The Nook), giving it time to bed in. It’s important for the Nurture Team to see what will work best for our needs at Blackhall and how the groups will fit in with our overall approach and staffing.
- It’s important that we have the right mix of children in the groups and it has been useful to see how they have settled into the class and teacher changes.
- Lynn Deane has spoken to all the children to let them know that the groups will be starting after the September weekend. There are some identified children, with the highest level of need, for whom the nurture input has been ongoing since the start of the new session.
- The teachers and support staff have all continued with the support strategies in place for the children, such as sensory circuits, movement breaks, calm time in The Nook, Therapet sessions, and individual visual timetables.

Overall Attainment for Blackhall PS

Reading		Writing		Listening + Talking		Literacy (Overall)		Numeracy	
24-25	25-26	24-25	25-26	24-25	25-26	24-25	25-26	24-25	25-26
96%	95%	96%	95%	97%	97%	96%	95%	94%	95%

Playground Improvement

Where are we now?



Highest Priority: Phase 1

- Drainage on pitch
- Relocate ball games: install a new all weather fenced ball court /muga with football goals and netball hoops
- Remove / relocate containers
- Add play equipment
- Add picnic benches
- Add traversing wall to building

Phase 2

- Field: Add sand pit & water tray
- Field: Install mud kitchen area
- Field: create allotment
- Field: create quiet garden
- Field: Install a stage

Phase 3

- P1: remove fencing and relocate bins along front into a bin store.
- Install P1 play equipment
- Install a planter with wall seating in courtyard.



Works done over summer:

The P2 Hut roof has not been repaired due to tight timescales.

Robin has removed the leaf grips to deter the pupils from climbing onto the roof meantime.

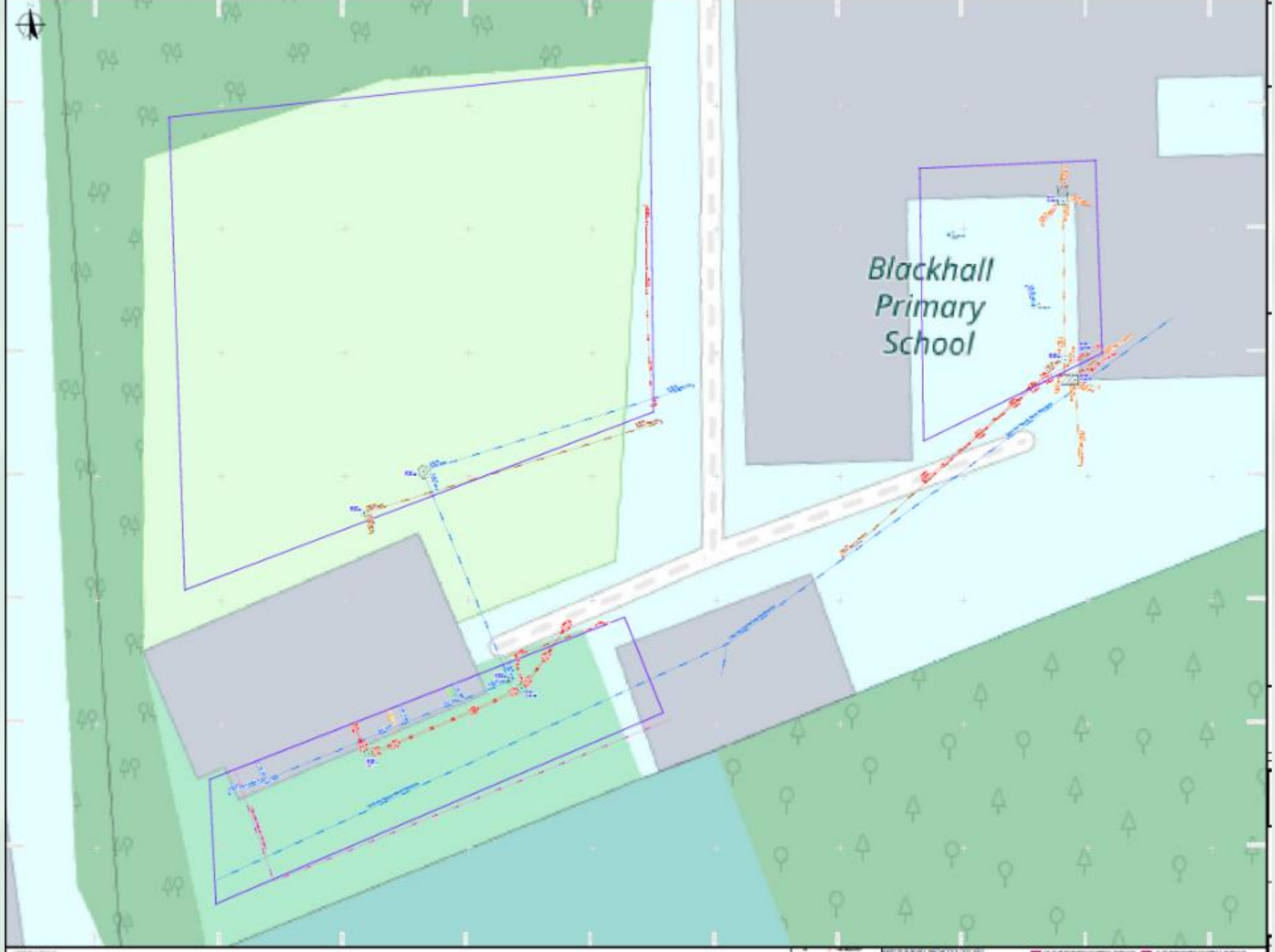
This area has 27m³ of **woodchip** blown in on completion of the **raised timber edging**.

Costs below charged to Maintenance Playground Revenue Budget:

- Sleeper Edging, Removal of partial Nursery fence, removal of leaf grips from shed, disposal of log seating from allotment area £1311
- Play woodchip 27M3 £2416.50

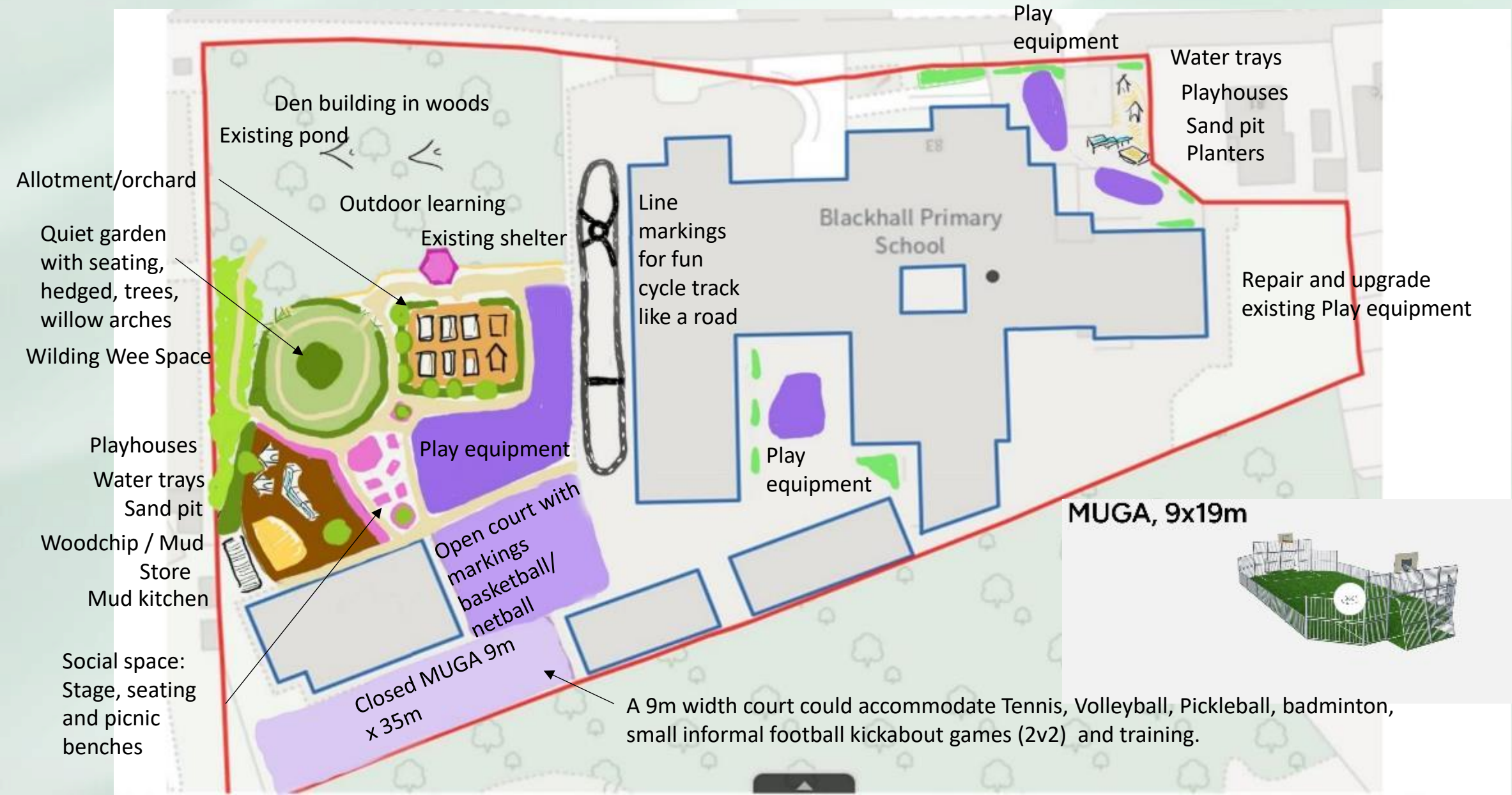
Total **£3727.50**

Grounds survey



Scenario 2

This was chosen by the children as their preferred option



THE END.

