

## Creating a Home Corner with a Difference

Lisa Slater

*Skipton Girls High School,  
North Yorkshire*

This project began when an initial request was put forward from our local primary school St Stephens. The head required some play furniture for the reception class's home corner.

However, with the demands of the National Curriculum and KS3 to find the free time to help the primary school would not have been possible unless it fitted into the Year 8 technology lessons for the year.

I suggested to Mrs Brennan, the Head at St Stephens, that if she were prepared to wait for a year and co-operate with our pupils during their project she would not only have the household domestic items of furniture, but a whole new purpose-built, designed environment for her school.

So St Stephens became the theme for Year 8 technology, a project that would form links with the local school and community, and in which pupils would have the chance to respond to a real design need, work in a realistic situation and respond to the clients' needs, the clients being not just the Head, but reception class teachers, and most importantly, the pupils themselves.

### ■ What did they expect in their new home corner?

The school was within easy walking distance and several pupils had attended it during their primary years so contact wasn't a problem. Setting the scene and introducing the theme of the project to Year 8 was achieved by a video taken of St Stephens showing classroom layout the original home corner set up, sizes of pupils and furniture. Viewing this generated many questions, identified the need to either improve or add to the education/play area for the young children. Pupil measuring sessions, questionnaires, interviews with pupils and colouring in requests all brought the schools into direct contact and provided information on exactly what was required in order to make the project a success.

Year 8 pupils at Skipton Girls High School experience 1/2 a year in CDT and then food-textiles-technology or visa versa. FTT is timetabled alongside IT.

So while 1/2 the class were tackling the project in hard materials the girls in textiles were also making their contribution to the assignment in soft materials. Fabric paints, fish shapes,

garden cushions, aprons and dressing up clothes were all included.

Brainstorming sheets were done in both subject areas and led on to chosen briefs, set by the pupils themselves, working in groups of up to four or as individuals, depending on the demands of the brief. Each pupil was responsible for producing 2D work for their chosen project, as this would be the main base for individual assessment at the end of the project. This had its advantages, for when a team of pupils were working on the same design they had more than one alternative to choose from or work with to pick out the best design features and develop them together.

Designs and developed ideas led to a 1/4 scale model which became the main link between the three Year 8 groups which were working on the project on different days. Each lesson, bits were added to give the overall impression of the final solution and how the individual groups' efforts would come together in the end.

Teacher pupil contact was high during the brief setting up stage to ensure the vital requirements for St Stephens' were met before the more ambitious areas were tackled. Requests for a Hoover, play food and kitchen equipment were Year 8's design priority.

The practical work took approximately 10 lessons with lunchtime sessions in between for painting and preparation work. Pupils worked very enthusiastically on the project and maintained a high standard of working throughout.

Some briefs required links with business and industry — a telephone and stickers were requested from the girls working on a phone box design from BT. Letter writing and contact all being part of their research.

Shipleys paint was the supplier of the paint for the majority of the project. Colour choice and ordering again being done by the girls themselves. With the initial play space filling up, one group started to work on an indoor carpeted garden to be placed just by the house. This would create more play space yet still be part of the home environment.

Letter writing took place to several carpet shops in Skipton and led to a large square of green carpet being donated.

The final part of the project was the presentation which took place in July — the



Above: Pupils by their phone box with phone and stickers donated by BT.

Right: Outside the house with the garden, dog kennel and phone box in place.



Environment was put in place and opened the following day by the youngest reception class member in front of a collection of school governors, teachers, advisers and of course the rest of the class. Pupils from Skipton Girls High School did a presentation explaining what they had made and how it could be of use to the youngsters.

The celebration continued after this event with a party for the reception class put on by the Food Technology department with a carefully planned menu to suit the young appetites.

### ■ Evaluation

This has continued into Year 9, with term reports from the reception class teacher on how the project is standing up to use, plus observation sessions with pupils recording activity within the space through personal contact and videoing play sessions.

### ■ Fitting into NC ATs

With the present four ATs this has been an extremely successful project. Pupils have gained a valuable learning experience which has made them more aware of identifying needs and solving problems within a realistic situation.

The chance to work in a range of media and in the three technology areas of food, textiles, and resistant materials gave pupils a remarkable breadth of experience and helped to develop transferable skills that will be of value in future projects.