



Case Study - Stormont House School, Hackney

Engaging pupils who learn differently

Stormont House School in Hackney, East London is a secondary special school for 100 pupils aged 11-16 with a complex range of needs. It aims to be a great school for children who learn differently by placing creativity at the centre of teaching and learning. (www.stormonthouse.hackney.sch.uk)

Inspired by a visit to the Eden Project in Cornwall, pupils at the school decided to develop a unique, outdoor learning environment in which to host their own eco system. Using photography, sketches and digital technology they worked closely with a landscape gardener, a digital media company and leading dome manufacturer, SOLARDOME®, (www.solardome.co.uk), to recreate their mini-Eden hothouse.



Following the planning stage, pupils were encouraged to help fill the dome, giving them the opportunity to learn about the germination of seeds, discover different soil types and investigate the climatic needs of rare tropical plants. Many of the pupils have adopted plants and are now caring for them; watching them grow and develop with interest. Since their combined Science and Art project, 'Interdependence', went live, the school has continued to work with landscape gardener Anna Hutton and has now adapted the dome to host plants which thrive in more arid environment.

Praising the initiative, arts coordinator Chris Elford commented, "By creating a unique, outdoor learning environment for our students we can engage them in a much more creative and hands-on way and enhance the teaching of a whole range of subjects."

The project was funded by Creative Partnerships the Government's flagship creativity programme for schools and young people. Managed by the Arts Council it focuses on the most deprived communities in England (www.creative-partnerships.com).



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