



#### TEAM STRUCTURE:

**Architect:** MODE 1 Architects

**Contractor:** Calabasas Ltd.

**Structural Engineer:** Bolton Priestley

**M & E Engineer:** Pinnacle Consultants

**Project Manager:** MACE

**Cost Consultant:** MACE

**Client:** London Borough of Lewisham

**User Group:** Forster Park Primary School

**Contract Value:** Approx. £150,000

### FORSTER PARK EXTERNAL WORKS, BOUNDFIELD ROAD, CATFORD, LONDON, SE6 1PQ

#### Site

The area of the works lies in front of the 1950's School building, and is the main approach for pupils and visitors alike. However, the main entrance is concealed from public view, and there is no clear signage or route to guide the way into school.

#### Design Objectives

The objectives for the design approach were very clear from the start. Firstly, the route from the entrance gates to the School's main entrance needed to be clearly designated, to give a clear identity to the School, as well as acting as a guide to first-time visitors and parents.

Secondly, it was extremely important to separate the routes of vehicles and pedestrians. The existing situation had children and vehicles using the same routes, with cars parked along the access route to the School. This was both a hindrance and a hazard, and gave the entrance the look of a car park.

The third objective was to brighten up, enliven, and make the space fun to use. The existing area was a grey, grim expanse of tarmac, with rusty gates and poor signage. The area did not look or feel like a main entrance, and there was no identity to the space. As such, it was an area to be passed-through, and was considered to be a poor use of space. Mode 1 proposed designating specific areas, with specific functions, to create a space with identity. Planting was a key feature that would be used throughout, to soften and brighten up the approach. This would be supplemented by new hard-landscaping features, such as seating, bins, planters and cycle racks, which give the space visual interest and an added function.

#### Materials and Appearance

The improvements begin with the brand new entrance gates, with coloured panels inspired by the children's designs, and displaying the School's name across the top. The pedestrian approach has been separated from vehicles by new metal fencing, also featuring bespoke panels. A curving green tarmac path leads to the School building, before curving right past the new Environmental Garden. Sets of footprints and animal paw prints lead the way. This area has been closed to vehicles by placing coloured bollards, designating a pedestrian-only space. It has been populated with seating and a bright pink 'Mushroom shelter' for the children to sit under. Once the path meets the grass, it becomes a paved 'Yellow Brick Road', winding past a new planting bed outside the Headteacher's office. This path brings visitors to the School entrance, which has been transformed by a bright red rendered wall displaying the School's name, and a new glazed canopy across the facade. Feature lighting highlights the lettering at night. The addition of cycle racks, seating and herb planters also designates this as a 'people-only' space.

#### Special Details

It was desired that the new learning spaces such as the Environmental Garden could be utilised and enjoyed by the children. This area contains a pond, boulder pile, log pile and areas of wildflower planting, to encourage wildlife and birds. It is hoped that this area is used as a teaching tool for the children, to enable them to enjoy the outside space and to learn about nature.

Throughout the design process, the involvement of the School children was of vital importance. Competitions were held at the School to design the panels for the front gates and fencing, enabling them to feel a sense of ownership over the new features. Overall, it was the intention to transform the neglected approach to School into a space that the children would enjoy and feel happy to be in, instilling them with a feeling of pride in their School and ensuring that they continue to look after it in the future.

