

# CASE STUDY



from  
Southern  
Water.

## Installing Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to **slow the flow** in schools across the south

### Background

Rainwater runoff from large roofs and impermeable ground is a huge contributor to localised flooding and storm overflows. Car parks, large roofs, concrete driveways, it all adds up, and impermeable land is increasing year-on-year. Schools have large roofs and lots of impermeable surfaces like playgrounds and pathways.

We saw an opportunity to partner with the Department for Education (DfE) to install Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in schools across the south. This has helped them manage their rainwater, educate pupils on sustainability, increase visual site appeal, and ultimately reduce the rainwater runoff that contributes to local flooding and storm overflow releases.



Engaging  
young minds!

### Our approach

- **Partnership:** We worked with the DfE on this jointly funded programme. We want to extend a huge thank you to all the schools and pupils who took part in this project.
- **Multiple schools, individual approach:** We wanted to work with as many schools as possible to make the biggest impact, offering each school up to five raingarden planters and in some instances creating larger SuDS such as swales.
- **Build excitement:** We delivered engaging and interactive talks to students to educate them on the raingarden planters, how they work, and what they are doing to help manage the rainwater runoff that contributes to flooding and storm overflows across the region.
- **Adopt a planter:** Once we install the SuDS, they become the school's property. This means the children can get involved with the maintenance and watch the plants grow. This provides a fantastic opportunity for pupils to learn about plant life cycles, biodiversity, gardening, and rainwater management.



## Outcome

We've installed raingarden planters at 43 schools so far, with another 50 planned this year. We have also completed two larger scale SuDS involving rain gardens, tree pits and swales with another two planned this year.

We've seen fantastic engagement in this project and have received positive feedback throughout the installations. We look forward to working with many more schools this year, across the Isle of Wight, Hampshire, Sussex and Kent.



Hands-on learning!

## Advantages

- Reduces onsite flooding and local storm overflows.
- Boosts biodiversity through extra plant life and encouragement of pollinators.
- Provides long-term engagement and educational opportunities for students.

## Costs

The cost of the SuDS in Schools initiative was jointly funded by Southern Water and the DfE. The programme totalled £1,792,000 of investment which included all materials and labour.

## Feedback

“The partnership between the Department for Education and Southern Water to install SuDS in schools is a shining example of how government and industry can work together to create a more sustainable future. By jointly investing £1,792,000 in SuDS in schools to date, we are reducing the risk of flooding, creating green space at the school, and educating the next generation about the importance of water management.”

– **Matt Gage, Programme Director, DfE's Schools Commercial Team**

“As part of our ongoing commitment to reducing waste and supporting environmental strategies, we are thrilled to have support from Southern Water, enabling us to add these new SuDS to our school.”

–**Frazer Westmorland, Headteacher of Mundella Primary School**

“We are delighted with the new rain gardens and, already, our students are benefiting from the changes to the school site. This is a wonderful opportunity for all year groups to cultivate a greater understanding of environmental care and apply this knowledge to shape a more sustainable future.”

– **Martin Jones, Headteacher of Dane Court Grammar School**

## Contact details

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