

West Bridgford School



At a glance

Location

West Bridgford School
Nottingham, England

The challenge

To provide a facility that would tie together plant biology across the whole school.

The solution

SOLARDOME[®] Paradise

Dome specification

Diameter	10.1m / 33' 3"
Height	5.2m / 17' 1"
Area	77m ² / 829ft ²

The West Bridgford School near Nottingham were awarded a £50,000 grant from the Wolfson Foundation for a 10 metre diameter geodesic dome glasshouse to help teach plant biology.

Dr. Alastair Stutt, Head of Science, found Solardome on Google when he was researching options for a new outdoor classroom. He knew other schools were using glasshouses to enhance lessons, so he wanted something similar.

"We settled very quickly on the dome concept because it was exactly the kind of thing we wanted, an attention-grabbing high-grade facility, and it fitted the space so well. It was a swift decision, really."

The school was seeking a facility that would tie together plant biology across the age range, from year seven to thirteen. Now whenever there is a lesson involving plant biology the dome is an attractive option.

"We have 120-130 students doing A-Level Biology, so it's very advantageous to have this facility."

In practice

To remain flexible the school introduced movable lab benches along with perimeter seating. This way the dome can easily accommodate a whole class and the necessary equipment.

When asked about practicalities Dr Stutt commented: "It doesn't matter whether it's a demonstration about desert plants, saprophytic plants, or perhaps a growth and photosynthesis experiment, we can do it very easily."

"It is also used as an art gallery and for music lessons because of its unique acoustics."

Current use

The dome houses a selection of exotic specimens, including cacti, aloe and a palm tree. It is also used frequently for growing edible plants.

"We've had a lot of success at growing basil, tomatoes and chillies using hydroponics."

Location

The dome has transformed a piece of rough ground in the school's central courtyard. It acts not only as an outdoor classroom but as an eye-catching feature.



Dr. Stutt elaborated: "The main reason for positioning it right in the centre of the school was that it is a completely secure location. Also, there was space for some external beds, which meant we could compare growth outside and inside very easily."

Reaction

Both pupils and visitors have reacted positively to the new outdoor classroom. A visiting professor from Nottingham University was said to be particularly impressed by it.

"I wasn't really surprised by the professor's reaction because it's exactly the kind of facility you might expect to find at a university," Dr Stutt added.

More information

Discover how you can make the most of the space at your school by calling us for a brochure today.

