

## Design for Courtyard for an Infant and Nursery School

The school is a large urban community school in a residential area with 9 infant classes and a 52 place nursery. It has an eighteen place specialist resource base for profoundly deaf children from 3-7 years. These children are fully integrated into mainstream classes with specialist support at all times. Several of these children have problems in addition to their hearing loss. The school integrates other children with Downs syndrome, spina bifida, Cerebral Palsy and Aspergers syndrome. I worked with Year 1 (three classes) in 2004/05.



### THE BRIEF

- ❖ To convert a very bare, bleak courtyard in the middle of the school which was not then able to be used by the children.
- ❖ To establish a courtyard garden for the use of all the children to sit and to work.
- ❖ The courtyard to have raised beds and to incorporate mosaics, influenced by Spain and the work of Gaudi, allowing for curriculum topics and for the children to work with Peter Harrington (see **article Peter Harrington Community Artist** under Garden Art).
- ❖ The garden to be designed for the educational purposes of colour, textures, tiles, Mediterranean plants, gardening, plant study and as a quiet corner.
- ❖ The garden to be designed using the current levels, allowing raised beds, seating, painted walls.

- ❖ The children to work with Bella D'Arcy along the lines described in the article **Designing for Schools.**



The courtyard was measured and observed. The hazards of the high narrow steps were noted by the children, and the suggestion of raised beds introduced as the site had no soil.

*Observations noted by the teacher*

The design workshops showed them how to use square and rectangular shapes for beds, troughs and seats, and circular shapes for pools and pots. They were encouraged to 'walk' their fingers round the plan to ensure that they did not block entrances or fall into pools.

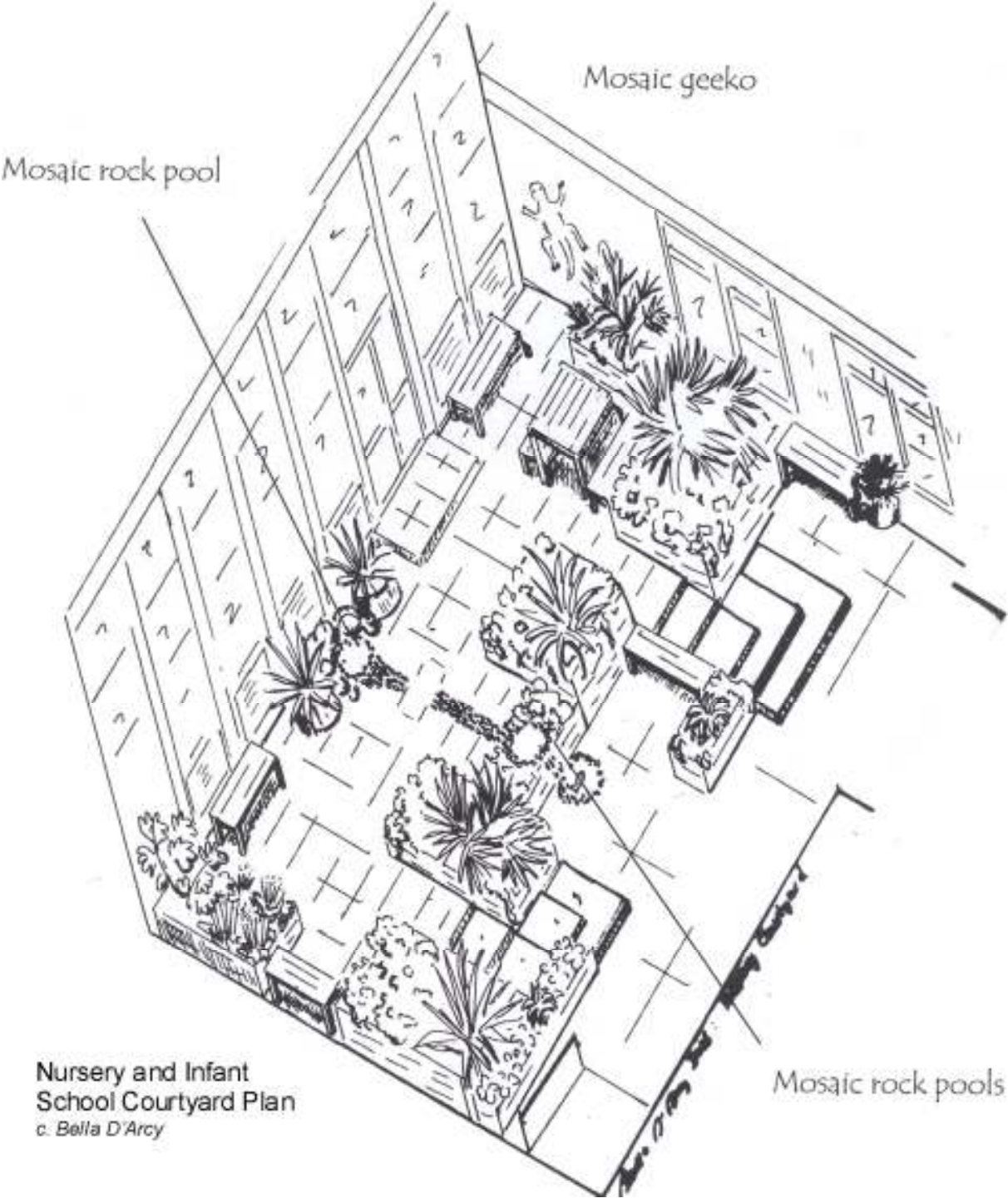
*Workshop with the designer*



The children worked in groups first on a big plan, then individually on smaller plans.



In a plant workshop, they learned about colour, grouping and where the plants came from – hot and sunny – to suit the hot, sun-trap courtyard. In the mosaic workshops they learned about the same things through mosaic pictures. The children then helped Peter with the construction of three rock pools and a gecko for the wall.



**THE FINISHED GARDEN**



