

## **Air Quality Briefing Note : Green Screens:**

Air pollution harms not only the environment but also people's health and well being; it can cause serious health problems and reduce quality of life. Poor air quality impacts most on vulnerable people such as the elderly, young children and those with heart and lung problems, causing respiratory disorders and aggravating asthma. There has recently been much research into the impact of air pollution on young people, particularly with regards to lung function and the onset of asthma. Young people are particularly vulnerable due to their developing lung functions their height means that they are more vulnerable to vehicle exhaust emissions.

Haringey Council has made a commitment, in its Air Quality Action Plan to '**raise awareness of air quality issues through working with local schools and linking measures that reduce air pollution with other environmental issues**'. A commitment is also made to raise awareness of air pollution in the Council's 'Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy'. The councils Air Quality Action Plan commits to identifying potential sites that could host a green screen, to work with suppliers and infrastructure managers to explore the feasibility of installation at these sites and monitor it's contribution to improving air quality.

With funding secured from the Governments Air quality grant scheme to engage with schools in Haringey to raise awareness about air pollution, green screens were installed at 2 primary schools in Haringey. A green screen enables vegetation to be introduced to places where other such green infrastructure is not possible, such as street furniture and underground services or restrictive to air flow. The participating schools are within Air Quality Management Areas and adjacent known air pollution hotspot areas for the pollutants of nitrogen dioxide and respirable dust particles. Both schools; Highgate Primary and South Haringay Infant and Junior school are within 150 meters of a road with >10,000 vehicles per day and required commitment towards the school travel plan.

Green screens offer value as they

- are a more immediate solution to enhancement of the streetscene/ playground,
- promote wellbeing and a healthy environment.
- Raise awareness and understanding of air pollution amongst school communities
- Improve the confidence, knowledge and skills of the school community around air quality, causes of pollution and actions that can be taken to tackle it.

The green screens have been installed around the perimeters of the playgrounds to lessen the air pollution impact on the pupils and also to improve the aesthetics of the playground / school environment. A small area in front of the screens has been left for the schools to plant up as they wish.

Both schools are thrilled with the green screens commenting that '*this project has truly made a difference to our school*' (South Haringay) and '*the screens have really transformed the nature of the space, both visually and in terms of sound*' (Highgate Primary).

By focussing this air quality improvement action at locations of relevant exposure, green screens reduce the risk of exposure to poor air quality, promote air pollution issues, complement and enhance existing air quality programs and existing borough plans and improves the local perception of air quality.

South Harringay Primary school playground before installation:



South Harringay Primary After installation





Highgate Nursery (adjacent North Hill) after installation:

