**Green areas boost child brains, study finds**

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

John von Radowitz

Green spaces within and around city schools improve the mental development of young children, a study has found.



They also improve the progress of “superior working memory” — the ability to update memories with changing information — by 6%, and reduced inattentiveness.

Computer analysis suggested that reduced exposure to carbon from traffic fumes might account for up to 65% of the trend.

The researchers carried out mental performance tests on 2,593 children aged seven to 10 attending 36 primary schools in Barcelona every three months for a year.

Over the study period, participants’ overall working memory increased by an average of 22.8%, and superior working memory by 15.2%, while inattentiveness decreased by 18.9%.

Exposure to green spaces was assessed with the help of satellite images. The scientists applied a measurement called Normalised Difference Vegetation Index based on the reflective properties of land surfaces.

The results are reported in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The study was led by Dr Payam Dadvand from the Centre for Research and Environmental Epidemiology in Barcelona.