

UNDER CONSTRUCTION @ WOODLEY SCHOOL & COLLEGE

Children and Young People's thoughts,
wishes and feelings about the new school
building

October-November 2023



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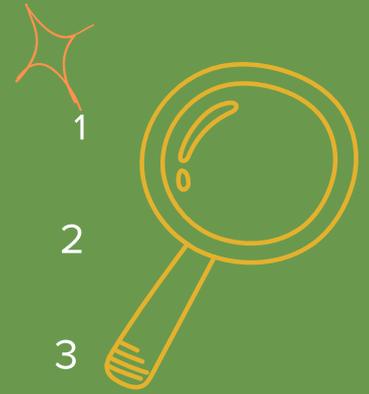
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THANK YOU

A huge Thanks to all the young people who contributed their thoughts, wishes and feelings throughout this project.

Thank you to the Colleagues who supported young people in the sessions, with a special mention to Suzanne Porter for co-ordinating the engagement visits.

WHAT DID WE DO?

The new school is planned for Autumn 2026. Who better to help us know what to consider in the design, than the current students.

We all have individual ways to communicate.

We tried creative approaches to help everyone participate and feel included in the design of the new school.



MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

We met with School Leaders and Class Teachers to understand what activities might be of most interest and be accessible to the young people at Woodley School and College .

ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES

- 1 Assistive Technology (Virtual Reality and iPads)
- 2 Observation
- 3 Meaningful Advocay
- 4 Drawing
- 5 Play-building with Lego, running under parachutes, ball games, treasure baskets and puzzles
- 6 Talking

INCLUSIVITY

- 1 Two introduction sessions to build relationships and assess young peoples skills and interests.
- 2 Manageable durations sessions to aid concentration and engagement.
- 3 2:3 staff ratios implemented supporting young people's participation.
- 4 Flexible approaches so young people could dip in or out or change activities should they wish.
- 5 43 young people participated in direct work sessions over the 5 week period.

WHAT DID THE INTRODUCTION PLAY SESSIONS TELL US?

Tech, is cool! We were excited by the the virtual reality and iPads.

Games with beach balls and the parachute would encourage us to join in and sue our energy!

Activities where we can sit and colour, build or sort were nice if we wanted quieter options.

THE PLAN AFTER MEETING THE YOUNG PEOPLE

1. A 'lets create a playground and outside spaces' session, using a treasure hunt, ball game Lego and mini figures.
2. A 'lets build our dream classroom' session using Minecraft and the IPads.
3. A 'lets make a relaxing space session' using virtual reality and treasure baskets.

KEY LEARNING?

If we tried to create a plan based on our communications, for our new school, it would look like this...

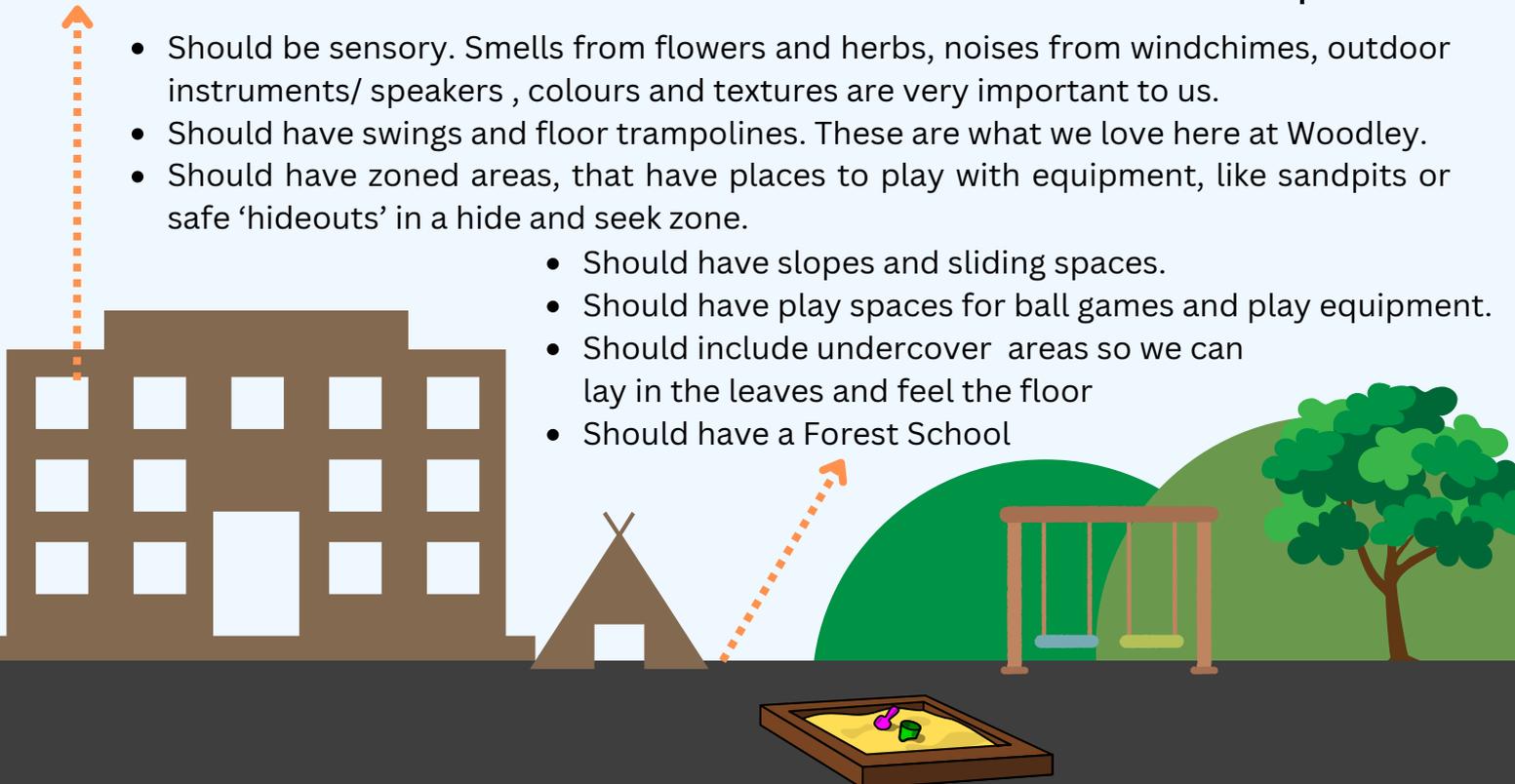


Our School building and classrooms

- A new build might be modern, but we like the aesthetic of medieval computer games. Soft lights, wood and nice textures in fabric.
- There should be well integrated technology. iPad's, screens and tech are used for learning, fun and communication. good connectivity throughout the school is important.
- There should be wide corridors. Sometimes when we need a space, the corridor just outside our rooms is a good place to sit and be calm.
- There should be big windows and 'look out spaces'. Ideally with some areas that 'bring the outside in'. Glass or sheltered walkways, veranda's and seamless indoor to outdoor structures were all communicated as good ideas.
- Could we consider a toilet and sink inside each classroom to help us with personal care and prevent us having to leave our classroom space?
- We couldn't agree on preferred colours, but bright tones were preferred over pastels.
- Booths/zones and screened spaces were important in our classrooms to create areas for learning, communicating and relaxing.

Our outside spaces

- Should be sensory. Smells from flowers and herbs, noises from windchimes, outdoor instruments/ speakers , colours and textures are very important to us.
- Should have swings and floor trampolines. These are what we love here at Woodley.
- Should have zoned areas, that have places to play with equipment, like sandpits or safe 'hideouts' in a hide and seek zone.
 - Should have slopes and sliding spaces.
 - Should have play spaces for ball games and play equipment.
 - Should include undercover areas so we can lay in the leaves and feel the floor
 - Should have a Forest School



DETAIL

OUTDOOR SPACES

What did we find out about the young people's preferences and ideas for outdoor spaces?

SENSORY AND PLAY SPACE

From squelching dirt between our fingers to laying in the leaves and kicking our legs, the outdoors can be a very sensory place for us.

Maintaining the forest school is important and having equipment like mud kitchens or sand-pits helps us to play, learn, and use our senses.

Our Voice Team: "I see you've gone straight for the play-doh from the sensory basket,"

Young Person-squeezes the play-doh between their fingers.

Our Voice Team: "Does that feel nice?"

Young Person-knocks on the table and smiles

Woodley Staff Member: They love to squelch mud, between their fingers, in the mud kitchen outside, but will only go and play out there if it's not raining. In the rain they sit under the covered area and watch"

Some of us have high energy and like to play together or with sports equipment. Places to play football, climb, slide, swing and hide, were all really important.

"It needs somewhere with space to play ball games. Like a game show"

"A nice playground to exert energy"

"Tree's for hide and seek"

"The swings, they are very popular"

WHAT DID THE OUTDOOR SPACES SESSION TELL US?

The current swings and floor trampolines are popular. Please have them at the new school.

Multi-use play spaces for ball games, exploration or relaxation would be great.

Some shelter for bad weather would allow us to use the outside on wet days.

We gather feedback and enjoyment from sound, light, smell and texture. Please integrate this into our outdoor space.



DETAIL

CLASSROOM SPACES

Using Minecraft Builder and iPads, we had a session building our dream classrooms. Here are the key messages we collected and some of the young people's creations.

READING, SOUND AND TECH

The designs on Minecraft featured 'comic walls', sensory nooks and 'boothed areas' a little bit like you'd see in a restaurant.

Our Voice Team: "They look like booths-like if you went out for dinner?"

Young Person: "Yes. It's nice to be able to sit alone and be able to have quiet and concentrate..."

Bookcases are also featured heavily in designs.

"It's a comic book wall, full of comics. That's fun"

When we talked about this, reading was a way to both relax and learn. Having a comfy library space in the classroom might be a place to work independently as well as a space to take time out.

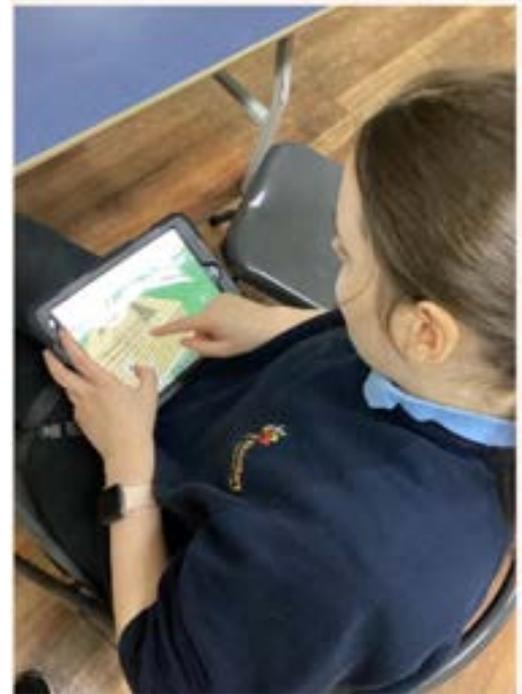
"There should be a wide corridor, where you can go sit when you need some space"

This led to conversations, that although there might be 'break out', sensory or regulation spaces, opening corridors up wider could work as these spaces too.

For regulation or learning, technology was a key theme.

"It's where you can escape the real world, by going into a digital one. That's kind of fun"

A young person needed to use the toilet in the session, but didn't really want to leave the space or their peers. This prompted ideas around each class having a toilet and a sink. Enabling their return class more quickly, if this was an option.



WHAT DID THE CLASSROOM SPACES SESSION TELL US?

Zones are good. Comfy places to sit quietly and read or watch screens, tables for group work and tech are the things we like.

Soft textures, curves and colour add interest.

Big windows and light matter.

WiFi connectivity and 'future proofing' with screens and charging ports would assist our communication and learning.

DETAIL

CLASSROOM SPACES: OUR MINECRAFT DESIGNS



OUR ARTWORK



Primrose's picture shows the school with a large bell on top. In the grounds, there are a bouncy castle, football pitch and somewhere for the school bus to stop safely. Inside of school there is technology enabling Primrose to watch things of interest, listen to music and play games.

Primrose enjoys swimming/water (pool to the right), caring for animals and playing with friends and wanted to communicate this in her picture. From this, we can see bouncing, sport (football and swimming), tech, music, games and safety are important.

"Trees for hide and seek"

Oliver

"Quiet, not busy, that's overwhelming"

Elijah

"A nice playground to exert energy"

Alfie



METHOD

RELAXATION SPACES

We used Class VR to explore some virtual relaxation spaces. Creative methods are key-but we found on this occasion the play became the focus and we did less communicating. For young people who communicate through action we took some treasure baskets. Here is what we did find out, by trialling the approach...

QUIET, IMMERSIVE AND TACTILE

Three virtual relaxation spaces were used on the Class VR headsets

- A beachscape with sand, sea, palm trees, whales and crabs
- A bubble room, with tubes, lights, and dolphins
- A fidget space with texture and light.

The light spaces were the most popular and some young people showed us how relaxing they found them, sitting on the floor, immersed.

“Music, I love music. It’s my special interest and I’m so glad that I don’t have to explain it”

The treasure baskets and stickers saw a clear preference for brighter colours (red being a common choice). The soft/tactile items were selected more commonly including fluffy pipe cleaners, play-doh, the sponge pineapple and soft toys.

For students who communicate through actions, the ‘little people’ were sorted into colour groups. So fiddle/textured finishes or built in movement activities could be considered.



Above is a young person's drawing of sensory ideas. There are lights, coloured balls (from a ball pool) and the parachute game. These were all communications about calming things.

HOW COULD THIS INFLUENCE THE DESIGN?

Spaces with variable and coloured lights, soft textures and the ability to use music/sound are all crucial

Bright colours appears to be a preference. Some further work would be needed to develop this.

The outdoors is so heavily linked to feeling happy/play, outdoor relaxation spaces are as important as those inside.



A student exploring the treasure baskets

PARTICIPATION: PERSONAL OUTCOMES

This engagement has supported young people to participate using communication tools they find the most useful. Creativity, time, play, and the support of staff who know the young people well, have meant contributions have been meaningful.

Alongside the learning for the new build, we noted some amazing achievements and personal outcomes, which we wanted to capture.

- A young person who rarely communicates through speech, sorted the 'little people' toys into colour order and verbally named the colour groups.
- We witnessed some very big smiles when playing a ball game. Some of the students were clearly proud of themselves for taking on a new challenge and succeeding.
- A student brought in some special collection items to show and share with the Our Voice Team. They had clearly made a connection and felt valued.
- Throughout the overall engagement the majority of the young people remained in the sessions, with only two occasions where students expressed a desire to return to their class after completing some of the activities.



ACTIVITY

THAT'S ALL GREAT, WHAT NEXT?

What are the outcomes and impact of young people's participation?



WE CELEBRATE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE AT WOODLEY SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

We thank the 43 young people for all their hard work, through an awards assembly.

Each student will receive a certificate and some goodies to say THANK YOU.

ALL OF THIS INFORMATION IS PULLED INTO THE 'DECISION MAKING MATRIX'

The young people's ideas will now sit alongside those of the adult's (Parents, School Colleagues, Design Team).

We can see what we all agree on and where there is challenge, to inform the plans.

WE CONTINUE THE COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING

The young people know they are valued. They have contributed to the development of their new school and have expressed that they have enjoyed this participation project. This is a personal outcome.

The young people have taught adults what might (or might not) work in terms of supporting them to participate. The Our Voice Team and colleagues can adapt their practice from this learning this is an operational outcome.

We can continue the communication and support participation as we move forward in the process. Young people's voice influences our commissioning process. This is a strategic outcome.