

Architecture & Design Scotland

Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

Currie Community High School

Pupils' Perspective

24th May 2019



**With thanks to staff and students from Currie
Community High School and their partner
primary schools.**

1.0 Introduction

In order to create a masterplan for Currie Community High School, City of Edinburgh Council are progressing with a number of stakeholder engagements to help determine the strategic brief for the investment. The masterplan will consider future options for the school, links with the cluster primary schools and wider community service needs before determining the mix of facilities to be provided.

Workshops were held on 24th May 2019 which brought together pupils from primary schools in the cluster, teachers and pupils from Currie Community High School, officers from CEC and members of the project team for Currie Community High School. One of the priority outcomes from this workshop was the need to consult with both teachers and pupils at Currie Community High School on learning and teaching needs and this report is a summary of the Pupils' Workshop.

Architecture & Design Scotland, a non-departmental public body of Scottish Government, has been invited by City of Edinburgh Council to facilitate conversations with learners, staff and community stakeholders to help explore opportunities and determine priorities for Currie Community High School.

www.ads.org.uk

1.1 Purpose

To understand the experiences and ambitions of young people at Community High School.

1.2 Outcomes

To capture and describe young people's priorities for the future of Community High School.



Pupils discussing the key issues for learners of the current school

2.0 What are the key issues for learners of the current school from your point of view?

At the start of the workshop the pupils were asked 'what are the key issues for learners of the current school from your point of view?' They were asked to put their thoughts down on post-its and then discuss their thoughts as a group. The results of their responses are summarised below:

General

Path into school – when you walk down it you are depressed

Corridors and stairways – very dark, very tight and steep– a lot of accidents

Corridors look old they are carpeted

Make travelling around school easier

Need good places to relax

Make foyer bigger and brighter so more people can fit in it

Stairs too steep and corridors too small

Make the exit bigger so more people can leave without causing a hold up

Stairs very deep and dark

Toilets and changing rooms are rank (no offense)

Disabled access

Make everything more accessible for people with disabilities

Clean toilets

Nice green house and flowers – nice smells around school

Social

Make foyer a more open space, bright and in centre of school. More welcoming.

Need variety of community places and general social spaces

Nowhere to hang out when it's raining

Need more things to do inside and out

Shops like Starbucks

More places to socialise

Learning

Classrooms need updating

Need somewhere to be quiet or study outside

More technology and equipment

More variety of classrooms

Outside

Sports facilities – better AstroTurf,

better equipment and a bigger

swimming pool

More stuff to do outside and inside –

make less boring

KEY ISSUES

- **Wayfinding**
- **Stairwells and dark corridors**
- **AstroTurf**
- **Community facilities**
- **Welcoming school**
- **Socialising**
- **Technology**

SOLUTIONS?

Well planned wayfinding strategies and layout of school

Welcoming Foyer

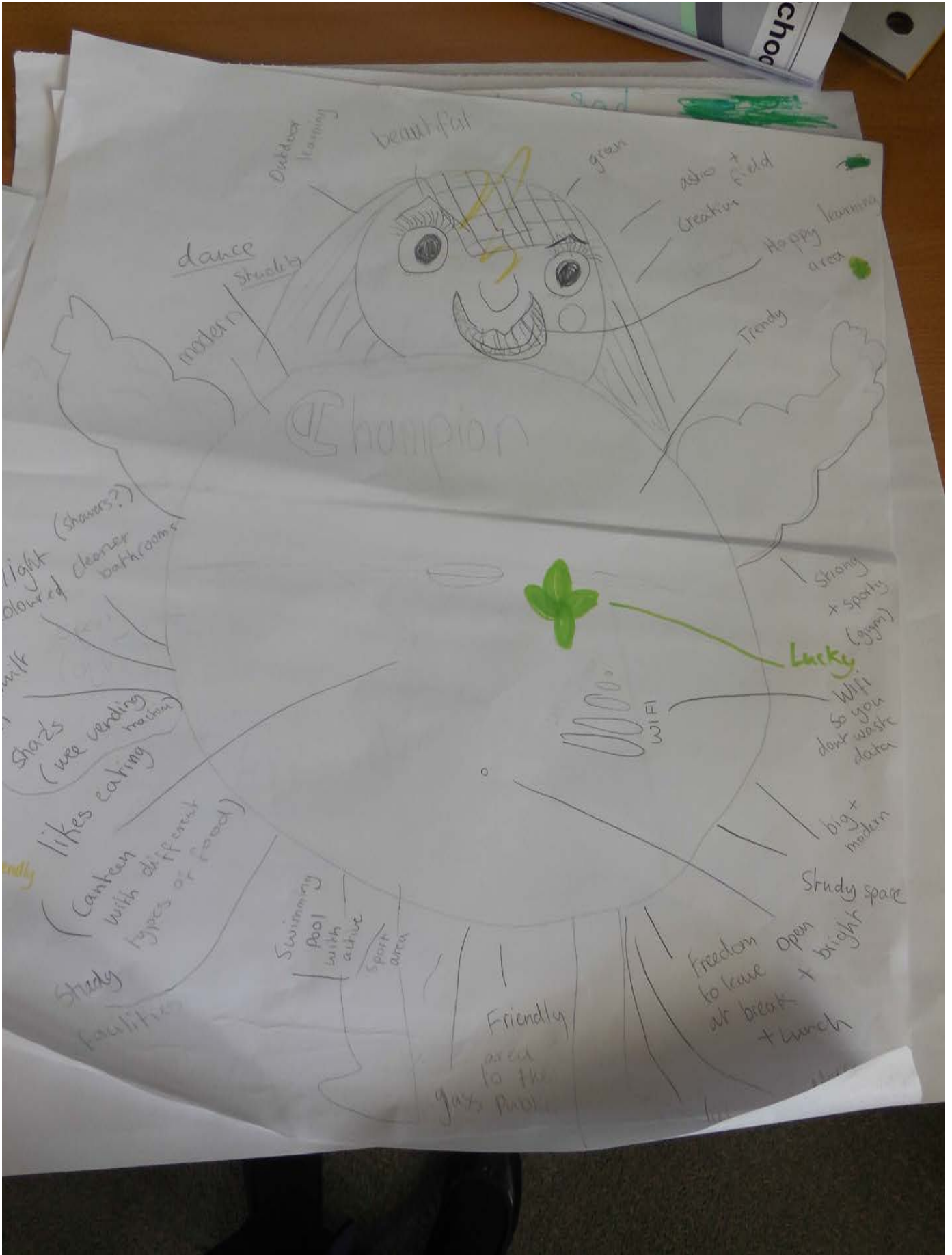
Improved sports facilities for school and community access

Places for pupils to socialise and learn more informally

Design with technology in mind

Pupils discussing the key issues for learners of the current school



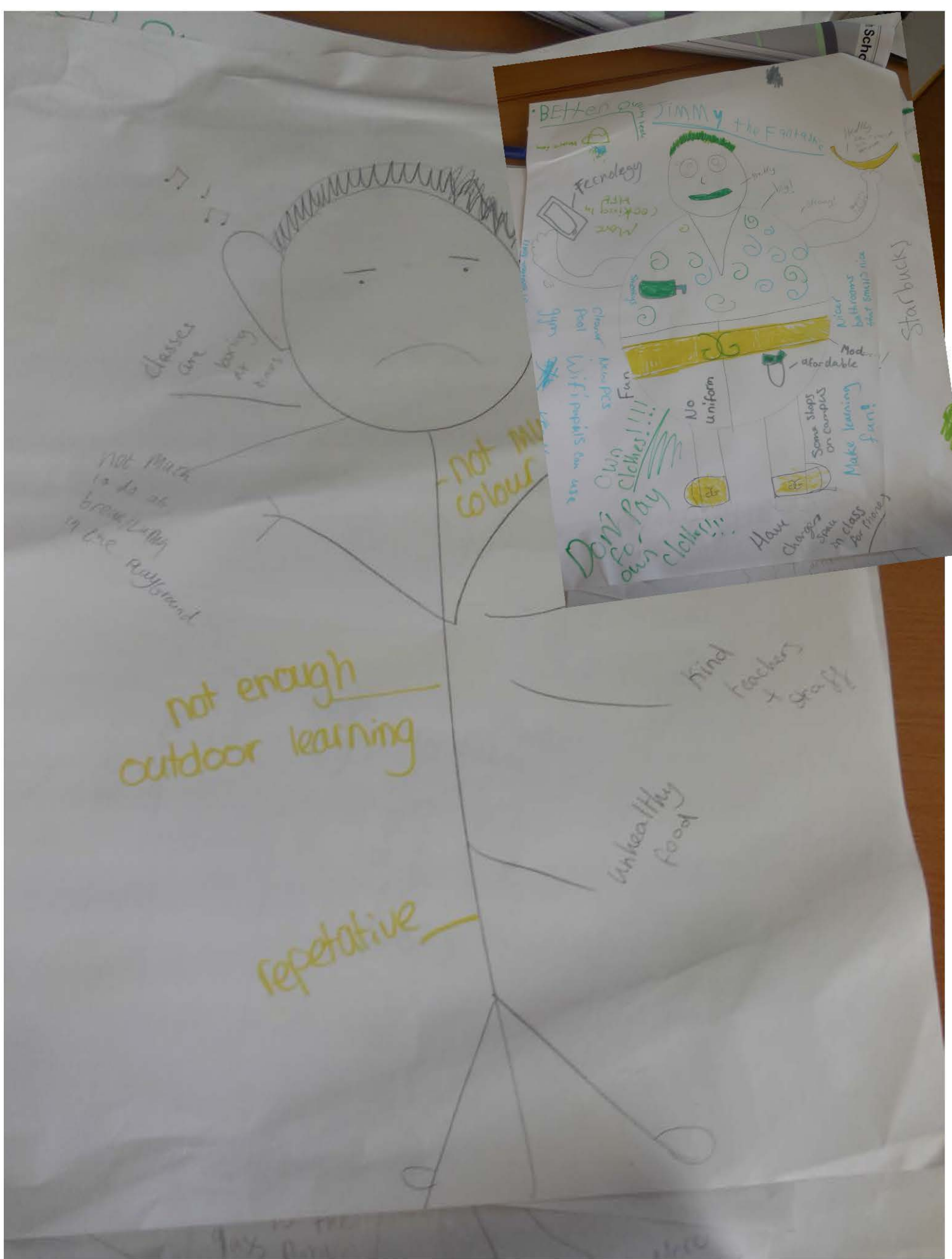


Sample of pupils' ideas about the school as a person

3.0 Imagine the school is a person, what type of person is it?

The pupils were asked to imagine the school was a person rather than a building, and asked to describe and draw its personality. Their responses are summarised below and overleaf:





Sample of pupils' ideas about the school as a person – insert image is what new school could be like

3.1 How does the building make you feel?

The pupils were asked to describe how the building makes them feel and how they would want the building to make them feel.

Depressed

Tired

Bored

Unsafe

Uncomfortable

Safe

Welcome

Active

Fun

Proud

3.2 What is the one good thing about how the building makes you feel?

The pupils were then asked to highlight one good thing they liked about the school and how it made them feel. Their responses are summarised here:

Welcoming

Community

Approachable

Understanding

Achievements

Kind

4.0 What would help your learning here?

The pupils were asked to put emojis on their current school plan. Asked to describe how that area made them feel and why and also asked 'what's the one thing that would help your learning here?'

The results of their responses are summarised below:

Learning

More engaging teaching

More interesting spaces to learn in and different types of classrooms

More social spaces to learn

Welcoming foyer and library for meeting and studying

More technology and equipment needed

Make everything more accessible for people with disabilities

Outside

More open spaces - indoor and outdoor

More activities to do outside

More spaces to learn outside and WiFi

Playing fields with more activities

Shelters, seats, picnic tables, sofas, swings and hammocks

4.0 What would help your learning here?

Building

Welcoming to the community

Layout is clear and can get around school easily

Wider corridors and stairs

Clean toilets

All areas for all pupils

21st Century technology

Modern design

Disabled access

Bigger gym hall and stage

Larger windows

Social

Good social spaces and a variety inside and out

WiFi in social areas also

Make a welcoming foyer so we and the community are proud

Environment

Green School

Solar panels

Make wind turbine work

Natural light to feel more comfortable

Make it more eco-friendly

5.0 Precedent Images

What kind of place do we want to create?

Finally the pupils were given a large selection of precedent images from other education facilities across the UK.

They were asked to select images that they felt would help to address the issues raised earlier in the workshop.

What would be good in their new school – and why?

The pupils placed their images on a Top Gear Style way – very uncool to Sub Zero being the coolest!

They were encouraged to question and discuss images that were placed on a particular table by their peers.

Sub Zero



Cool



6.0 Review of existing school estate

The pupils were asked to review the existing school floor plans as well as the wider site area they each placed an emoji in an area of the school and were asked to discuss with their peers then put their thoughts down on post-its and then discuss their thoughts as a group.

The pupils were asked to highlight areas where they thought there were issues and areas where they thought there could be opportunities to address their key issues and concerns and what solutions could be.

Their comments are summarised below and copies of their marked up plans are included on the following pages:



No dark tight corridors

Wider stairways and not so steep

Things to do and places to sit outside

Sheltered areas outside

Social areas and informal learning areas

More technology

WiFi outside

Better sports facilities and changing rooms

Heart of the school – welcoming foyer

Better AstroTurf

Better community facilities

Feel safe walking around school – too many accidents on stairways

Café – affordable and accessible to all

More light in classrooms and about school





Currie High School Site



7.0 What happens next?

Drawing on the knowledge and reflections of the pupils from the workshop, the following next steps are suggested:

1. Engage

Engage the pupils in shaping the communication of the future proposals for Currie Community Academy. This should be a collective project, linked to the curriculum to:

[a] engage the whole school community on key issues and needs to feed into the project development

[b] visualise what is happening and when

[c] establish a key student link to the project so all future communication by the project team include consistent student involvement

2. Explore

Explore the opportunity to develop 'Try before You Buy' experiences in the short and medium term, led by students, to test their ideas on improving spaces before and within the construction phases.

This could draw on the Inspiring Learning Spaces Toolkit;

www.ads.org.uk/inspiring-learning-spaces-toolkit/

and the Tests of Change approach;

www.ads.org.uk/repurposing-learning-space-tests-of-change-information-resource/

3. Empower

Empower pupils to develop the culture of the new spaces and ways of working, co-designing values, expectations and ways of using space with teachers and peers.

This might build on the work of similar initiatives elsewhere such as;

http://rubble.heppell.net/media_forum/wesley_spaces2.pdf

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