

Halyrude RC Primary School

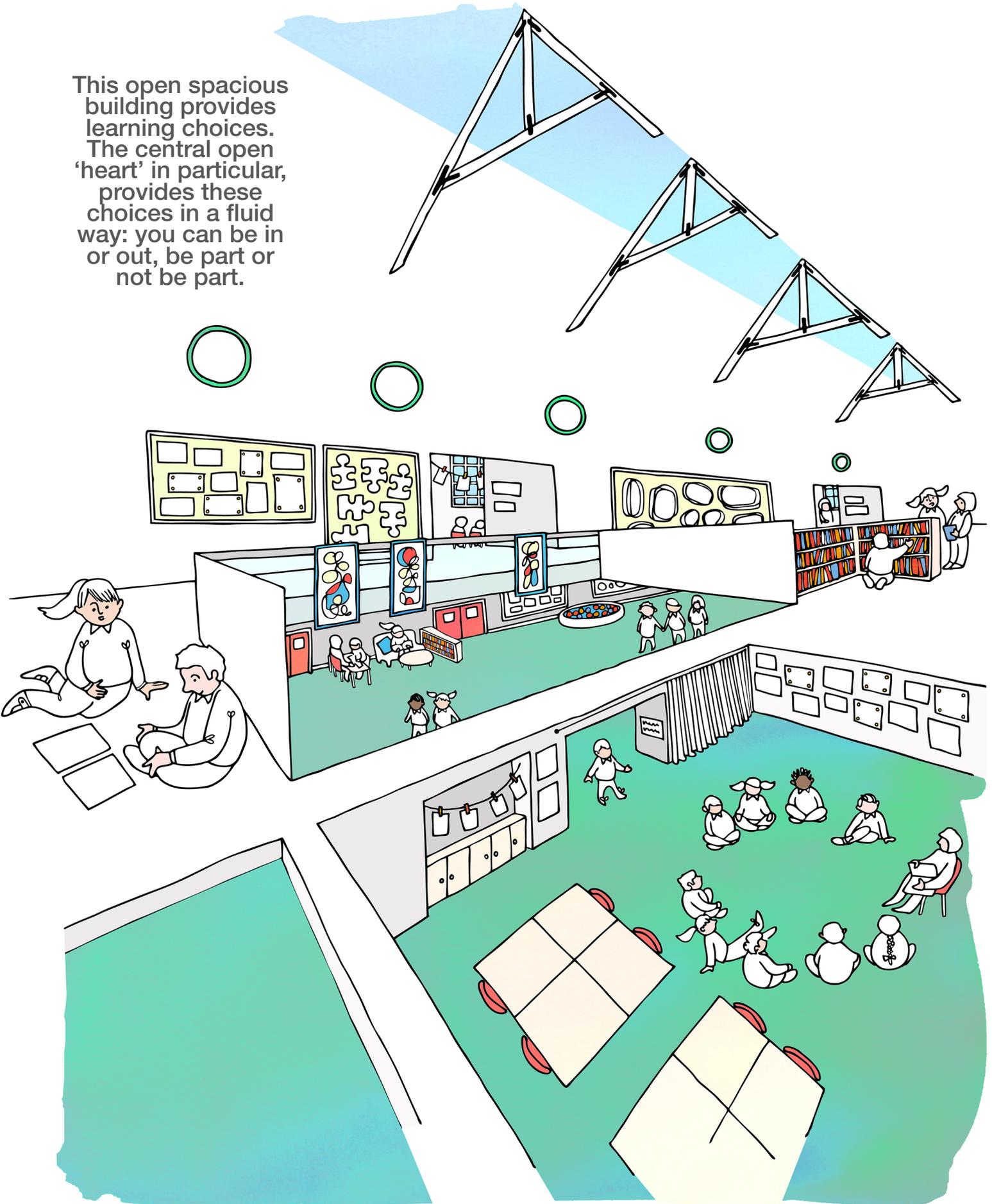
Small School Design: Case Studies



Architecture+DesignScotland
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Halyrude RC Primary: The Heart of the School

This open spacious building provides learning choices. The central open 'heart' in particular, provides these choices in a fluid way: you can be in or out, be part or not be part.



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Overview

Halyrude Roman Catholic Primary School is a small School in the Town of Peebles.

The school had been identified for new accommodation for a number of years and in 2011 they vacated their building on Old Church Road and moved into this newly refurbished Victorian School in a quiet location on Rosetta Road.

The school building, formerly Kingsland Primary School, was substantially re-modelled for the arrival of the new community of learners, which includes the Tweeddale Support Centre and pre-school learners in the Rosetta Playgroup.

The re-modelled school provides a more open and dynamic environment centred around a double height top lit space.

Perspective

Architecture and Design Scotland (A+DS) visited this School to see the learning spaces and meet with staff at Halyrude RC Primary School. This Case Study, which is part of a series of 'Small School Design Case Studies' gives their views on the project as including these overall impressions;



- ^ Victorian exterior of Halyrude
- < Front Page: Atrium roof trusses
- < Opposite: Illustration of Halyrude Primary (Main Illustration: Abigail Hall)
- ✓ Artwork by the school children





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Background

The refurbished School caters for a diversity of needs with three learning organisations collocated and sharing use of the building.

The school role is eighty nine pupils, but there can be around a hundred children using the building at any one time: this includes Halyrude pupils, learners attending the Tweeddale Support centre and pre-school children in the Rosetta Playgroup.

Although organisationally separate, all communities share common spaces such as Gym space, Dining Hall and Playgrounds.

The Tweeddale Centre, which caters for young children with complex learning needs, is located right in the centre of the building and is well integrated with the School, sharing use of all the common learning spaces.

All three groups benefit from a building that supports the delivery of a modern education in an integrated and inclusive way.

An open heart

The re-design of this two storey building is centred around a large double height gathering space in the heart of the School.

This top lit space was the original atrium within the Victorian building but had been concealed for many years while occupied by Kingsland Primary. Kingsland had a substantially larger school role and demands on space had led to the atrium being converted to classroom space on both the lower and upper floors.

Now, with a smaller population this generously proportioned space has been re-instated and the architectural features of the roof trusses and the day light this provides are being enjoyed once again.

The atrium is known as 'St Joseph's', after the original primary school in the local area. It provides a bright and airy gathering space, an 'open heart' for the whole school community to flow through.

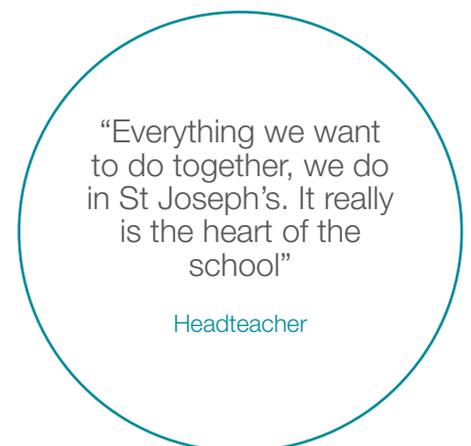
This big multi-purpose space is used throughout the day for a mixture of break-out activities, group work, active learning and quiet activities. On the upper level there is a small library area and at lower level the space has a range of flexible settings for all ages including early years activity space.

Ebb and flow

Over the course of the day the dynamic of St Joseph's changes, at times buzzy but also offering the opportunity to be more intimate. It's place at the centre or 'heart' of the school ensures it's continual use and a natural 'ebb and flow' of the School community.



- ^ Break out learning in 'St Joseph's'
- < Opposite: upstairs in the atrium balcony
- Below, the central space, 'St Joseph's' a multi- function open learning area
- ∨ Early years activity space





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Whole school learning

The generous scale of the St Joseph's space enables it to be used for large group gatherings, congregation, celebrations of achievement and worship. It is used to support curriculum delivery in new ways, such as 'Whole School Learning' with children working cooperatively and collaboratively across age groups in one big communal space.

Balancing openness and privacy

There are 6 classrooms, plus a learning support room all located off the central space at Halyrude. The layout of the classrooms is largely based on the original school layout from the 1900's with modifications made to enable learning in a more open and fluid way.

The classrooms are bright, modern and spacious learning spaces which flow directly into the central gathering space. The classrooms have wide openings into the atrium - there are no doors except on the Tweeddale Centre - and yet while the atrium can be a lively and noisy environment the classrooms are acoustically sheltered.

The arrangement of semi open classrooms around the atrium provides a good balance of open-ness and privacy, interaction and focus.

Meeting practical needs

In the classrooms deep alcoves provide recesses for storage and equipment, and in combination with lowered ceilings these act as a buffer to the noise and activity in the central space.

The bright, modern classrooms provide a range of furniture for the mixed age groups with ample wall space for display of work, storage, whiteboard, projection, interactive whiteboards and pin boards.

"The school is a bright, vibrant and flexible environment and an excellent resource for our entire school community"

Headteacher

"They particularly enjoy the space they have to embrace fully all the learning activities offered through a Curriculum for Excellence"

Headteacher



- < Top: Semi open classrooms
Bottom Left: Break out learning and open classrooms connect to the atrium
- > Top: Tweeddale Centre
Bottom: Wide openings to the classrooms allows easy connection to St Joseph's

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Sharing Spaces and Sharing Benefits



As well as the central atrium space, the refurbished school also benefits from a separate dining hall and gym hall. This is unusual for a small School, but all of these spaces are shared use with the Tweeddale Centre and the Rosetta playgroup.

This separate gym hall and dining space is valued within the school as it enables the delivery of subjects like PE and Music with a lesser degree of disruption than previously was experienced using multifunction space.

The spaces are clearly zoned into a learning area, administrative area, gym / dining areas. All of the areas are clustered in a manner that is logical, easy to use and navigate.

Making use of available spaces

Although there are six classrooms, the current school role supports four classes (three composite plus a dedicated primary seven class).

The school makes use of the unoccupied classrooms for activities like art and computer work. In this school building, there is ample space to work without disturbing others in lessons.

Throughout the school the staff and pupils benefit from a quality and generosity of space that they had not previously known. Teaching staff have a meeting room and separate staff room as well as ample support space for equipment and learning materials.

Using all of this roomy school environment did not come easily at first. Such is the generosity, scale and choice of space in contrast to their previous building that there was a period of adjustment required to adapt to find a way to fill and use all of the building.



^ Top: Dining Hall
Bottom: Gym Hall

“Staff and children had to grow into the space, some of the young children found it quite difficult to come to terms with the vastness. Now we love the opportunities the space provides”

Headteacher

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Outdoors: Big Spaces for Small Communities

The generosity of space extends beyond the school walls and into the outdoor learning spaces. The play space is quite extensive, so for supervision reasons, the school contains play to the area at the rear of the school.

There is also a small garden which provides a more intimate space for this small School community. The school are planning to have the garden landscaped later in the year so that their pupils can enjoy better use of outdoors for learning and play.



- ^ Extensive outdoor play and a traditional rural small school building from Ettrick or Yarrow, now used as storage.
- ✓ The school garden

“It has a village in a town feel with the small size, quiet location and inspiring views”

Headteacher



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Good Ideas for Small Schools

There are particular things that work well at this small school, benefiting this community of learners and enabling delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence.

This case study highlighted the following good ideas:

- Create learning environments with plenty of natural light and a sense of space and open-ness

"The School removes any sense of constraint. Even in deepest darkest winter the sense of light is uplifting"

- Create schools that enable and encourage a natural ebb and flow of learning, by offering choice and fluidity

"We have a great range of spaces available to work in that enables us to work more effectively, more timeously. The central space in particular provides these choices in a fluid way: you can be in or out, be part or not be part"

- Create inspiring buildings that foster creativity

"This School enables us to be creative and to think creatively, if we want to do it is achievable, we can make the children and the school fly"

- Provide gathering spaces that are central and open, and use the open heart to foster community

"The central gathering space encapsulates, both symbolically and functionally, the heart of the school. It enables us to be in a school where we are working at our best"

- Provide spaces to support collaborative learning

"The design of the space brings great benefits in how we work and learn cooperatively and collaboratively within and outwith age groups. We can bring the whole school together when we need to in the big communal space, St Joseph's"

"There is a very strong sense of community in the school, as all of the staff can easily know each child, academically and socially"



^ Above: the central learning space
> Opposite: illustration of children at PE (Illustration Abigail Hall)

"This building allows us to do amazing things"

Headteacher

"The blend of old and new works well. It has permanence to it, you know it will last. It is feasible it could still be here in a hundred years. That is a positive thing"

Headteacher

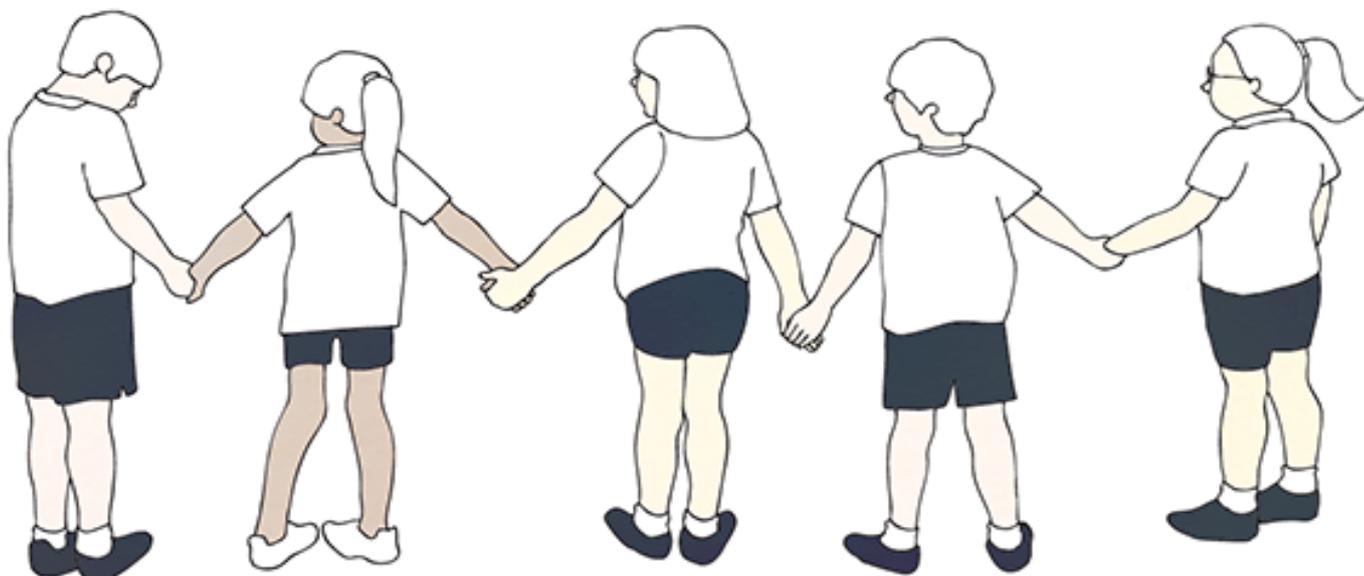
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Key Message

The re-modelled school provides an open and dynamic environment centred around a communal heart. This arrangement of spaces offers choices for the community of learners in a natural ebb and flow of activity.

“The design of the environment can bring great benefits in the human aspects. The central space, in particular, provides choices in a fluid way”

Headteacher



Project Information

School: Halyrude RC Primary School
Location: Peebles
Council: Scottish Borders Council
Architect: Scottish Borders Council
Age Range of Pupils: 5-12 years
School Roll: 89 pupils

This Case Study has been produced by the Schools Programme at Architecture and Design Scotland (A+DS). For more information about what we do, visit SmarterPlaces.org.

Credits:

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