

Newton Primary School

How do spaces respond to the changing needs of pupils?



Background

The Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) agenda has a strong ethos around learner led approaches to space in cosy family settings. Newton Primary School has been putting in place innovative settings from early years to P1 and P2.

The next challenge was to create more variety for the P3-5 and the P6-7 pupils. This was to help pupils take responsibility and encourage self-directed learning, both indoors and outdoors. Teachers and support staff worked together to create an action plan. The school's ambitions were to be able to adapt the teaching to the needs of pupils, encourage self-directed learning at all ages and have more collaboration.

Building on these ambitions, the action plan included:

- agreements on how to effectively use the shared spaces
- new Science Technology Engineering Maths (STEM) spaces with links to the outdoor
- collaborative learning hubs near classrooms
- group working and individual reading areas within the library

Testing Ideas

Learners across different year groups tested possible new settings as a series of 'space hacks'. The tests considered different age groups and different settings, including:

- Bake station and pupils' café
- Group gathering and performance space
- Science Hubs
- Collaborative working tables

Outcomes

Starting by working in year groups and locations they were familiar with, the groups were then brought together to collaborate. Sharing learning and experiences helped pupils to have more confidence in speaking out and expressing themselves.

Across the tests, and across age groups, common themes emerged including the need for:

- quiet spaces and individual study space
- more defined shared and group activity spaces

The process helped the school to gather information on the needs of learners. This is informing investment and practice decisions.

School:

Newton Primary School, Stirling

Project Lead:

Architecture & Design Scotland

Project Consultant:

Studio 42 Design