

Clydebank High School

How do learning spaces support voice and choice?



Background

A key priority for West Dunbartonshire Council is to ensure that schools make the best use of available space – in the buildings, outdoors and in the digital space.

Clydebank High School is a Public Private Partnership (PPP) school. It supports 1,500 learners and their families. It has 150 staff. Its School Improvement Plan identifies 'health and wellbeing' as a priority. This aims to ensure that there is more choice for learners and that their voices are heard.

There is a perception that PPP schools can't be personalised or changed. The focus of this project was to support a learner-led approach to re-imagine spaces to better support socialisation and to test what is possible in the space.

Testing Ideas

A group of teachers and young people developed a strategy for change. The group engaged the PPP partners to test priorities for real spaces in the school around:

- break out spaces for individual or group work
- social spaces and use of circulation spaces for social learning
- flexible learning space, adaptable for subjects and learning styles

Working with the Council and PPP partners, the learners identified and agreed spaces to prototype and test new models of learning. They gathered evidence around circulation, materials, health and safety and adaptability. In Clydebank the learners used cardboard, cushions and rugs to create 1:1 scale models.

In less than half a day, learners tested and evaluated seven different formats. This helped them to create evidence for decisions on future investment in the school. The spaces they tested included:

- quiet study booths and standing desks with charge points
- collaboration tables
- presentation space and drama stage
- break time space

Outcomes

In each test the key priority that emerged was to extend the choice of spaces. This would support the wellbeing of the learner. Testing the prototypes in the spaces of the school showed what was possible. It provided immediate feedback to learners around their ideas, as well as evidence for decision makers.

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