**Inverurie Community Campus**

**New Build Up-date January 2019**

The new build is picking up momentum and it is really exciting to see the progress. As St Andrew’s is a single story structure, it wasn’t part of the initial foundation build. The wooden structure was manufactured elsewhere to be added a little later. However, it won’t be long before we will be able to see our new school taking shape.

I would like to share some of the collaborative discussions which have taken place over the last few months, and how these discussions have impacted and will impact on the build.

Swimming Pool changing rooms

St Andrew’s has its own designated warm water pool and hydrotherapy pool at the new build, situated next to the new community pool. Initially, it had been planned that there would be 2/3 separate changing places toilets for use by our school. Discussion around this pointed out that it was important that a whole class is able to access one changing room at the same time, in order that staff are not split between rooms. The result was that the changing rooms have been knocked into one, allowing enough space for a seating bench, 2 mobile changing beds, a toilet and washbasin, and 2 shower heads. The specific areas of the room will be divided by mobile movable dividers (similar to what we have now) as a room covering hoist means that walls within the space cannot be erected.

Hydrotherapy pool

John (the project manager) contacted me to ask our requirements regarding the finish to the hydrotherapy pool in terms of thickness of walls and available materials. After doing some research and talking to OT and PT, a decision was made to go with thicker walls which would enable the use of more resilient and better quality building materials.

Swimming pool

The first mock-up of the swimming pool included a narrow built in step area into the pool from the side and two ladder steps (one at each end of the pool). The Oxford Dipper (hoist) was situated at the shallow end. After discussion with the swimming instructor, we requested that the steps reach right across the shallow end as they do now (the edge of the steps in the original design would have caused a potential risk when children were swimming underwater). For a similar reason, we asked that the step ladders also be removed, particularly as our pupils will either use the graduated steps or the hoist system. Finally, we requested that the hoist be moved to the deep end of the pool, as this is more practical when aiding pupils in and out:

Finally, there was a question around deep end depth (100cm or 90cm). As our deep end is currently 79cm deep, we opted for 90cm as we felt this presented a safe depth for all of our pupils. Those requiring a deeper pool will be able to access the main community swimming pool.

Powerpoints and data points

We had a meeting to look at number and positioning of powerpoints and data points in each of the rooms throughout the school. This took into account the position of teaching walls, individual study booths, access points for cleaners, charging points for ipads/laptops and charging points for equipment such as standers and adjustable school chairs.

Room layouts

Room layouts were looked at at a much earlier stage in the process, to discuss specific requirements, e.g. height adjustable work stations, hobs and sinks, tilt and turn plasmas for each room within a teaching wall, moveable partitions to make the use of space more flexible and installation of digital as well as analogue clocks for medical purposes. Joint resource cupboards will be shared between 2 classrooms. This will house the class fridge (as it was felt by staff that some pupils find it very distracting to have the fridge in the classroom) and a lockable medical cabinet. Rooms throughout the school have different levels of tracking depending on requirements – some have room covering hoists, some have partial covering hoists, and some of the sensory rooms (where identified) have single track hoisting. Rooms not fitted with hoists will be fitted with the structures which would allow retro-fitting should this need to happen at a later date. Further considerations have included removal of windows from sensory spaces (both for sensory and safety reasons).

Outdoor area

An initial meeting took place including John McLeod (project manager), Iain Loud (senior design manager) and Andy McLatchie (landscape architect).  As well as the designated St Andrew’s outdoor space, we discussed pupils accessing a large area directly next to this which can be secured during the day by locking the access gate to the street. Discussion included: a sensory area (which would include a covered area), a track for bikes, a mud kitchen, and an enclosed area for playground equipment (which would possibly include a wheelchair swing, regular swings, a basket swing, a climbing frame and a wheelchair roundabout). We talked about the need to include different surfaces, such as grass and recycled rubber, and the benefit of having undulating surfaces. It was also pointed out that there would be various grass spaces around the campus, as well as an all-weather pitch which can be accessed by St Andrew’s pupils. The agreement was that Andy would make a preliminary plan for the outdoor space which could then be shared with pupils, staff and parents with a view to finalising preferences regarding specific details. I will let everyone know as soon as this is available and we will arrange a meeting.

Catering

After discussion, we felt that initially the main campus dining room might be too challenging for many of our pupils and that we would benefit from designated dining spaces within St Andrew’s school itself. The best option was to multi-purpose the life skills room and the art/music room to be dining areas over lunch time. One of these rooms will be the junior dining area, and the other the senior dining area, each with seating for 20 pupils. The intention would be that there will be 2 sittings in each of these rooms each lunch time. In discussion with Catherine Mutch and Ian Paterson from catering, it was agreed that the meals will be produced in the main community campus kitchen, and moved to St Andrew’s via heated trolleys, where they will be served to pupils by catering staff. There will obviously be risk assessments carried out to ensure the safety of all. We discussed the types of plates and cutlery which would best suit our pupils. It was initially suggested that pupils might be presented with the main and pudding at the same time on a tray, but we explained how some pupils would find it very difficult to eat their main if the pudding was already on the table, and that the amount of food on the table at any one time would be overstimulating. We have agreed to trial melamine plates before the move to ensure they are practical and convenient. Catering identified a room next to the St Andrew’s rooms which could possibly be fitted with an industrial dishwasher and be used for storage for the trolleys and cutlery to prevent the need to trolley used dishes through the school. It was agreed that St Andrew’s pupils would continue to access the primary menu. We also discussed that as pupils familiarise themselves with their new setting and become more confident, some might find it possible to access the main campus dining area, just as some of our academy pupils currently access the Inverurie Academy dining room.

Robertsons

I recently had a meeting with Ashley McDonald from Robertson’s (the building contractors) to discuss opportunities for engaging our pupils in the build up to the move, and to prepare for transition. She had lots of suggestions, including:

* Building challenges, e.g. ‘The Tetrahedron Challenge’ and the ‘Build a House’ challenge. Robertson’s have resource packs available for these challenges, and can either deliver them to the school for staff to access, or come in and lead the challenges. These challenges involve experiencing different building materials and consideration of how to build strong structures.
* ‘Dave the bear’ – Dave is a large bear who can visit school with all of his PPE. Pupils have the opportunity to dress him, and to dress themselves in the various protective wear.
* We can choose a group of pupils who will be our ‘Robertson’s reporters’. In January, these pupils will be invited to the building site for a show round. They will then be able to take pictures and information back to share with everyone at school.
* In March, there is a big bridge project planned for the Wyness Hall, which our pupils could be involved in.
* As part of the new build, Robertson’s are planning a sensory garden. They are asking each of the local schools to design a panel for the garden, and St Andrew’s will have their own panel.
* Robertson’s would like to provide a construction area within our current grounds so that pupils can explore building materials, traffic lights, fencing, signs and tools. We plan to choose a group of pupils who will become the ‘site managers’ and be instrumental in planning and developing this construction area over the course of term 3 so that it is accessible to all pupils in term 4. This will be situated in our secure garden area next to the polytunnel.

Communication with John McLeod, the project manager, is frequent. I feel we are being consulted about the things that matter, and that we have a real voice in relation to the progress of the build and making sure it is what we want and what we need. If anybody has any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Vicki Ward

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St Andrew’s School