“We want to be treated like VIPs
At night there will be lights leading from
the gate to the front door and lights above
the door – this is the path to learning”

Design Festival Participant
## Contents

School Works Background ........................................... 4  
Introduction ................................................................... 5  
Section 1: Executive Summary ..................................... 6  
Section 2: Recommendations for Next Steps .................. 9  
Section 3: Project Overview ......................................... 10  
Section 3: Project Steps ............................................... 11  
Section 3: Participants .................................................. 13  
Section 3: Administrative Arrangements ....................... 13  
Section 3: Facilitators ................................................... 13  
Section 3: Inspirational Tour Summary ......................... 14  
Section 4: Design Festival ............................................ 16  
Section 5: Conclusions ............................................... 44  

Annex A: Process Team Timetable .................................... 51  
Annex B: Inspirational Tour Response Examples .............. 52  
Annex C: Design Festival Participants ............................ 56  
Annex D: School Works Process Team ............................. 59
School Works Background Information

School Works focuses on three main activities;

- Influencing policy, e.g. advising Partnership for Schools and DfES.
- Sharing good practice, e.g. Seminars, publications and case studies
- Implementing participation across sectors, e.g. acting as advisors to industry and Local Education Authorities.

School Works is a not for profit company which works in partnership with a range of organisations including DfES, BRE, CABE, RIBA, and the Design Council. In 2002, School Works was selected for the BT vision 100 index, which identifies innovative UK organisations that have achieved strategic goals through visionary activities.

We are working to link the design of school buildings with their impact on teaching, learning, culture and management of those schools. In order to achieve this, we are bringing together the best in design and build with the best in education.

Participation is at the heart of our approach, connecting those who design and build schools with those who work and learn in them. We argue that there is a need not only to ensure that school buildings are beautiful and inspirational, but that they are functional, effectively linking ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ design and educational issues.
Introduction

This report has been produced without editing of content or findings by the Authority. It captures the outputs, conclusions and recommendations from our work with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council during April-June 2005, in managing a participatory project involving local school communities in the design of eight new learning centres. The work explored school design, management and organisational issues and the outcomes as outlined in this report, will be used to inform the Borough’s school planning processes.

Knowsley’s commitment to engagement was demonstrated in their ability to involve a wide range of stakeholders in the process and it was a pleasure to work with a client who places such importance on this approach. We feel the involvement of staff and pupils, governors, council officers and elected members ensured a fantastic shared experience and provided a huge amount of detailed information, which we hope this report fully reflects.

Our thanks go to Mike Rees for initiating this Participatory Process and showing an unfailing commitment to providing the right forum in which to engage all the stakeholders. We would also like to thank Kate Stewart, from Team ago-go in Liverpool, who was the Lead Facilitator on this project and represented School Works.

We are very grateful for the support and involvement of several key people in the various venues we visited as part of the Inspirational Architecture Tour, including Su Newell at the Empire Theatre, Sara Hilton at World Museum Liverpool, Laura Challinor at Network Rail and the exhibitions team at FACT.

Thanks also to Pauline Taylor and her staff at Huyton Library for providing an amazing venue for the School Design Festival; to the Head Teachers whose ongoing work contributed to the brief for the Design Festival; to Jayne Clough for all her behind the scenes work to make everything run smoothly and to the workshop facilitators who brought a high level of expertise and experience to the Design Festival itself.

We would also like to thank colleagues and senior politicians who came from across the Council to visit and participate in the School Works Design Festival.

Most of all, our thanks go to all the participants. Yet again we have found that, given the opportunity, users are best placed to offer real insights into what will work in the design of their school. This process was about encouraging participants to create potential design solutions and set design aspirations; now that these views are known, Knowsley can use the information to help ensure that their new learning centres can deliver what is needed for the future of learning and community use in the Borough.

Ty Goddard and Hugh Dames

School Works, June 2005
Section 1

Executive Summary

This section includes the main conclusions from the 40 workshops delivered at the Design Festival on 25th and 26th May.

Conclusions

The workshops provided a rich source of data. The wide-ranging discussions and practical activities raised hard design, and softer management and organisational issues for the schools to consider. Below is a summary of the main management and design findings from the process.

General

Participants felt the need for the new Learning Centres to foster respect for all. They should be exciting, inclusive, welcoming, open, light, safe, well maintained and secure places to work, learn, socialise and play in. Both the buildings and grounds should themselves be tools for learning.

Multifunctional open spaces were preferred and designs should factor in the need for comfortable furniture throughout that is tailored to different learning situations and the different age groups who use the furniture. The centres should also incorporate standardised reliable ICT systems to enable work to be carried out at various places within the buildings and beyond. Sustainability, in terms of materials used, efficiency of design (e.g. natural heating and lighting and facilities management) was agreed to be very important.

There were calls for ‘world class’ sports and arts facilities to be incorporated into the designs and for both public and pupil art to be placed within buildings, on building facades and throughout the grounds. There was a shared belief that incorporating these facilities and features would help inspire all users, break down barriers between schools and their communities and provide a welcoming atmosphere that would add value to the centres by encouraging extended use.

There was also a wide understanding about access for all and it was strongly articulated that the new Learning Centres must exceed statutory regulations in regard to DDA and building regulations.

Workshop Specific

Learning Spaces

The key components of the ideal learning space were agreed to be comfort, tranquillity, uplifting colour and warmth. Other features such as carpet, upholstered
seating, different lighting options and glass or translucent walls were also identified as important requirements.

**ICT and Communication**

There was agreement a consensus that ICT offered the potential to transform the learning environment. Predominantly, there was a need for a better standardisation of equipment and ICT networks to enable users to log in wherever they are on a school campus.

**Internal Social Spaces**

There should be more social space than existed in participants’ current schools. These spaces should incorporate moveable partitions to create smaller spaces when needed within larger open plan areas. They should be designed for comfort (especially furniture) and use curved rather than angular forms for both rooms and furniture, have natural lighting, and be easily accessible to outdoor space.

**External Social Spaces**

Participants hoped that the external spaces of the new Learning Centres might offer a wide variety of functions, from social to learning, sport and arts and also be areas characterised by sustainable technologies such as solar power, recycling points, water conservation and land drainage solutions.

**Inspirational Buildings**

Toilets, receptions, learning spaces and common rooms were the main areas in which really good design could work towards fostering a sense of overall school pride by users. Participants also felt that all pupils should be able to use the main reception and that reception areas should reflect the history as well as the future of learning in the Learning Centre.

**Sustainability**

The key priorities included the three R’s, Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, use of natural resources such as daylight (through use of sun-pipes), solar heat, green roofs and natural ventilation. Specific requests included the creation of outdoor teaching spaces, individual lockable bike sheds, water features to create calm, use of recycled building materials such as recycled rubber pathways and some really innovative energy production options such as the ‘friction slide’.

**Behaviour and Security**

Open plan solutions and multi-functional transitional spaces instead of corridors and supervised, light, open, clean, modern shopping centre type toilets were favoured ideas for “designing out” behaviour and security problems. It was the view of participants that vandalism was seen partly to be a product of boredom that could
therefore be reduced if adequate high quality, social and activity spaces were provided.

Heart of the School

A good physical heart of the new Learning Centres would be modern multi-functional, open plan spaces but with calming natural features that also incorporated recreational facilities like art galleries, balconies, cyber cafes and information points.

School Identity

Participants concluded that greater school community involvement in the design of a school will help foster a sense of shared identity with that school. A school ‘wardrobe’ would give more choice and individuality and create a sense of ownership over the uniform. Incorporating more external artwork, soft landscaping, and use of curves as design features rather than harder shapes (typical of many of the existing schools) appealed to many participants and may help foster a sense of pride and ownership of the new centres.

Community Use

Additional facilities generally fell into the categories of sports, health, and multi-media and arts. There was a desire for all of these facilities to be used for both curriculum and community use, and that these facilities provide open access for all, including different cultural and religious groups.
Section 2

Recommendations for Next Steps

The recommendations in this report reflect aspects where more work or consideration is required following the Participatory Process.

Recommended next steps for Knowsley BSF team include:

- For School Works to make a presentation on the outcomes contained in this report to the Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council to allow the conclusions and recommendations to be discussed and agreed;
- To work to develop criteria against which to judge potential Bidders, based on the outcomes of this report;
- Include this report, or an agreed digest of it, in the documentation provided to the Private Sector Bidders, and invites bidders to respond to the conclusions in their bids;
- Knowsley to identify its own priorities for consultation strategies to ensure the involvement of all stakeholders at appropriate points in the process;
- Consideration of the use of other tools to ensure good school design, for example, Design Quality Indicators;
- Considering developing the material gathered as part of this process for an exhibition to celebrate the excellent work and promote ongoing debate;
- Considering the specific management related Issues which have been raised by participants and quickly carry out further consultation regarding these in order to inform the brief to Bidders. This includes lunchtime issues;
- Setting in place specific projects to capture the history of each existing school;
- Consider launching a school logo and motto competition.
Section 3

Project Overview

This report summarises the activities undertaken, and the resulting outputs, from the School Works Participatory Process with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council during May and June 2005. In drawing this information together we have aimed to:

- provide a clear analysis of key issues which can be used to inform the BSF process;

- advise on how participation can be built into the ongoing work in the Borough. We recognise that the Participatory Process has started a real debate with the various communities who have an interest in the new Learning Centres. It is important that this continues as the thinking about the organisation and management of the new sites take shape.

Project Background

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council asked School Works to run a comprehensive participatory process for involving the communities of 11 schools in the design processes of 8 new learning centres proposed within its Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme (timetable attached at Annex A).

Process Objectives

A key objective of School Works is to explore how pupils and staff experience the school environment and the school day, and help translate that experience into a design brief owned by the Borough. In order to do this, we have developed a process which surfaces issues, explores possible solutions and builds consensus amongst stakeholders.
Project Steps

The key elements of the Knowsley process were;

- working with the BSF team and the Head Teachers group to establish their priorities;

- establishing a Process Team which included expert facilitators from a range of backgrounds. In this case we put together a team of lead facilitators including an architect, landscape architect, three designers, an educational psychologist, a communications specialist, a music in workshop specialist, a community sports worker, and community arts worker from Knowsley and teaching staff from the schools;

- taking 69 pupils and staff from the 11 schools on a series of visits to inspirational buildings and spaces in Liverpool city centre. We ran these visits on the 13 May 2005 in three groups, with up to 7 participants from each school. The tour encompassed different environments and included the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT), World Museum Liverpool, St Georges’ Hall, Empire Theatre and many outside public spaces. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire about each space they visited, exploring what they liked and didn’t like, and how the space made them feel. They were also given cameras to photograph features which inspired them and things they disliked. During the tour, staff at several of the venues talked to the participants about the specific features of the buildings and what decisions had been made during their design;

- to respond to Knowsley’s desire to show a wide range of building styles, by creating a slide show of inspirational buildings which participants were asked to vote on. This additional element of the process was designed and produced by Team a go-go. The specific questions and images shown related to key areas of schools and learning centres including, corridors, toilets, dining halls, learning spaces, receptions and outside social spaces as well as general building styles and use of materials. The outcomes from this slide show have been fed back separately from this report and the same process has also been used in Knowsley’s Community Area Forums;

- delivering a 2 day Design Festival which provided an opportunity to work with 150 stakeholders to identify critical issues in the schools and to begin to develop creative design solutions. Through a series of 40 half day design workshops the Festival identified issues which the schools and the Authority wanted to address, then explored possible ways of tackling those issues through design and educational, cultural and management interventions. The workshops were also structured to develop consensus around what was important, and to surface preferred solutions. Each of
- the workshops had a lead facilitator and up to 15 participants. The workshop groups included participants from a mix of the schools to enable ideas to be shared and to encourage co-operation. At the end of the Festival, school specific workshops reviewed the event and looked at how the key messages might be taken back to the wider school communities;

- following the Design Festival, the Process Team met for a debrief day to review the process, capture the main findings and agree next steps;

- key findings were fed back to a group of Knowsley officers working on the BSF programme to meet BSF bidding schedule and Kate Stewart, as Lead Facilitator, has responded to outcome questions as they have arisen;

- a short DVD about the Design Festival was also produced using footage shot by the pupils participating and this was shown at the Bidders Day in June;

- Team a go-go have also produced a web-based questionnaire which Knowsley’s primary and secondary pupils will have the opportunity to complete online. The results from this will be fed back separately to this report;

- this report of the process captures key messages and design priorities as contained in participant outputs from both the Tour of Inspirational Architecture and the School Design Festival.
Participants

All of the eleven Knowsley secondary schools were represented in the process, including pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff and governors. Authority representation included elected members, Council officers and key individuals from the community. (Full participant list for the Design Festival is attached at Annex B).

Administrative Arrangements

The success of the project can be attributed to an effective working relationship between Hugh Dames (School Works), Kate Stewart (Team a go-go) and Mike Rees and Jane Clough (Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council).

Facilitators

The mix of internal and external facilitators worked well. The teaching staff from Knowsley who facilitated workshops brought a deep understanding of the issues from the three schools and of the local context. In contrast, the external facilitators – architects, educationalists, and communication and participation experts - brought a breadth of experience from a range of previous projects. This enabled capacity to be built on two levels:

- for Knowsley there is now a pool of local facilitators who understand the School Works participatory process; and

- for School Works we now have more external facilitators who have experience of the Participatory Process.
Section 4

Inspirational Architecture Tour

The Inspirational Architecture Tour allowed participants to experience and reflect on a range of different spaces and to see what messages there might be for the design of their own learning environments. It also provided a design vocabulary that they could bring to the School Design Festival.

The groups visited a combination of the following buildings and spaces:

- Campbell Square
- Empire Theatre Extension
- FACT
- Lime Street Station
- Metropolitan Cathedral
- Williamson Square
- St Georges Hall Plateau and St Johns Gardens
- Wolstenholm Square
- The World Museum Liverpool
- Rope Walks, Art House and St Peter’s Square

Employees at some of the places we visited acted as building guides and provided an insight into the history and use of the buildings/spaces along the route. Participants were given a questionnaire to complete on their first impressions, how the space made them feel, as well as what would be good and bad about working in the buildings. This questionnaire also included some examples of words that can be used to describe buildings and spaces and also how they may make us feel. This enabled the participants to begin to explore the impact that buildings and spaces can have on us.

We also gave participants a number of disposable cameras and asked them to take pictures of things that inspired them and things they disliked. These included particular buildings, parts of buildings, spaces, colours, textures, signage, furniture and fittings. A flavour of participant responses to the buildings and spaces on the Tour are set out in Annex B.
Tour Summary

From the Tour we were clear that participants had a real appreciation of the importance of how buildings are designed and used. In particular:

- Participants took a very practical view of spaces; considering factors such as maintenance to be important. They also repeatedly expressed concern over the need for the adequate provision of bins and the need for good lighting to promote safe usage of spaces throughout the day;

- Lime Street Station, a space that many of the participants are familiar with, was looked at in a different light during the tour and participants expressed their appreciation of the functionality of the space with its ‘indoor/outdoor’ feel and how the vastness of the space was made more friendly by the use of ‘buildings within buildings’;

- The World Museum Liverpool was the most popular building visited. It offered a number of creative solutions to navigation, public and multi-functional spaces and participants were impressed with the use of IT as a tool to aid independent navigation, as well as the bold graphics used throughout the building;

- In general, the use of art and sculpture both internally and externally created a huge impression upon the participants and they were particularly keen on sculpture that also had a function, such as providing seating or shelter;
Section 5

School Design Festival

The Process Team developed the Design Festival around the priorities expressed by the schools. This meant we covered a number of core areas in the Design Festival. In total we ran 40 half-day workshops on the following themes:

Workshop 1: Learning Spaces
Workshop 2: ICT and Communication
Workshop 3: Internal Social Spaces
Workshop 4: External Social Spaces
Workshop 5: Inspirational Buildings
Workshop 6: Sustainability
Workshop 7: Behaviour and Security
Workshop 8: Heart of the School
Workshop 9: School Identity
Workshop 10: Community Use

A summary of the workshops and their outcomes follows. A list of workshop facilitators is included in Annex C.
Workshop 1  Learning Spaces

Purpose

Participants explored what they found to be the most successful ways in which they could learn and the places that they find most conducive to learning. The aims of the sessions were to provide an opportunity for participants to share their views on:

- What learning is about and how they think they learn
- Where they do their learning
- What is their ideal learning space
- What learning spaces are needed in new extended school/learning centre buildings

Activity

Discussion and activity took place about the nature of learning using problem-solving activities from Feuersteins’ Instrumental Enrichment materials as illustrations. Having identified the key issues that were important to them in relation to a learning space the groups then produced their own ideal learning space design.

Summary Findings

The participants identified key ways in which they learn as:

- Thinking ahead
- Concentrating
- Creativity
- Matching/comparing
- Searching
- Learning
- Negotiating
- Team work
- Listening
- Looking
The places that the groups identified as spaces in which they learn included (in priority order): at home; outside; in a library; in school; in a cyber café; in a museum; in a nursery; on holiday at the theatre.

Important design issues in relation to their preferred learning spaces included:

- Quiet/no distractions (no one telling you what to do all the time)
- Comfort (better furniture)
- Size of working space
- Decoration (colour and interest)
- Range of interesting activities
- Safety
- Access to teachers (to seek help from if required)

**Priorities**

The three priority issues identified by the groups for their ideal learning spaces were comfort, tranquillity and warmth/colour. A wide range of ideas for improving learning spaces were identified as;

**Designs reflecting subjects:** The design of each room should reflect the subject being taught e.g. displays and decoration relevant to that subject for interest and also to remind you of what the subject is about.

**Carpeted flooring:** Different and attractive floor coverings including carpet.

**Comfortable furnishings:** Furnishings should be comfortable but not so comfortable you are too relaxed to work.

**Glass walls:** Glass walls to allow in more light.

**Good signage:** Signage and colour coding could be used to inform you of directions/safe areas and allowed routes around the building.

**Calming colours:** Colour schemes should be calming but interesting and may be themed.

**Good lighting:** Lighting should be modern, should include natural light and it should be possible to adjust the intensity;

**Music:** Music could be played to provide a calm atmosphere.
Workshop 2  ICT and Communication

Purpose

The main focus of the workshop was to explore the issues arising from the use of ICT in Knowsley schools, to look at the vision for ICT and to consider possible solutions. The key aims were for participants to:

− define Information Communication Technology.
− investigate the way that ICT could enhance learning.
− examine any difficulties experienced with ICT
− identify solutions and provide prioritised actions for the BSF programme

Activity

Participants looked at individual items: laptop; digital camera; mobile phone; mini disc and microphone; dictaphone. They then mind mapped the advantages/disadvantages and creative ways these could be used to enhance/assist learning in the school environment. They were then presented with a brief to prepare a five minute filmed presentation on innovative and interesting ways of using ICT in future “Palaces of Learning”.

Summary Findings

We were able to identify some of the difficulties experienced by staff and pupils in accessing and using ICT at school. There was a good mix of adults and children in each workshop. Interestingly, all four workshops identified almost exactly that same range of problems, including:

EXISTING PROBLEMS

| - Limited access time to computers | - Loss of traditional skills |
| - Poor maintenance | - Lost work/wasted time/frustration |
| - Need for constant upgrading | - Not enough networking |
| - Access to games/distraction/misuse | - Viruses/gremlins |
| - Training for staff/pupils/parents | - SPAM and inappropriate material |
| - Technical support/repair | - Problems with the server |
| - Incompatible technology | - Poor work environment |
| - Chat rooms | - Expensive equipment |
| - Limited supporting technology e.g. printers | - Technophobes |
| - Too many systems that may not be compatible with each other | - Theft and personal security |
| | - School security/vandalism |
The Way Forward

There was agreement across the workshops that ICT was the way forward and that at its best it could transform the learning environment. All of the groups wanted to have inter-active whiteboards, laptops and access to broadband. They also highlighted the need for better networking throughout the school building.

All groups identified training and support as a key issue to make the vision happen. Even if the staff are trained, they are often reluctant to make ICT an integral part of their lessons because of equipment problems, often involving the loss of pupils work. One group suggested negotiating better contracts for fast repairs and replacements. More technicians are also required to maintain and up-grade equipment.

Safety and security is a major issue. The physical security of equipment in school tends to lead to a poor working environment. There was much discussion about the fact that fantastic equipment makes the school attractive for pupils but also for thieves. The result is often that ICT is taught in heavily secured rooms with shutters that are airless and tend to be dark and stuffy which leads to a lack of concentration and interest. Many children expressed a desire to have a personal laptop but are concerned about personal safety and the danger of theft and the responsibility for the equipment. Memory sticks were mentioned as a possible solution.

Concern was expressed in all workshops about the problem of access to unsuitable material on the Internet. Some staff have given up using the Internet because “word
or image recognition” used to block access to unsuitable material often mis-interprets innocent requests.

One workshop raised the issue of losing traditional skills such as library use and interpersonal skills and suggested that we should be aware of this and ensure a balance within education.

**Priorities**

**Reliable, fast, up to date ICT:** support – number of technicians is at present too small to both upgrade and service computers in school.

**Fully integrated ICT:** ICT should be an integral part of learning and communication

**On going training for staff, pupils and parents:** Training should include common technologies as well as new technologies.

**Make learning fun!** Learning could be made more fun by using:

- Interactive whiteboards for every class
- Laptops in every class room
- Inter-active touch screens
- Comfortable, bright environment

**Creative thinking:** Planners should consider creative ways of incorporating ICT including the following:

- Inter-active notice boards
- Touch screen virtual school tours
- Webcam
- Exams on line
- Inter-active planners
- CNC (computer numerically controlled) minicams, laser cutters for design and production.
Workshop 3  Internal Social Spaces

Purpose
The main focus of the workshop was to explore what participants wanted from the internal social spaces in the new learning centres. The key aims were for participants to;

- identify the problems that school users experience with the existing social spaces.
- explore aspirations for social spaces in their new schools through visualisation.

Activity
We discussed the different areas, activities and people in the school and ‘mapped’ the connections between these elements using post-it notes on the wall. We then went on to write and act out short scripts depicting conversations among different school users and staff, about different spaces. The discussion was held on whether the provision of better social areas could help to cut back vandalism. Participants were then introduced to selected images of other social spaces, including cafes, bars and offices and they listed what design aspects were good and appropriate for their future schools.

Summary findings
Existing school social areas were described as sometimes intimidating and having;

- a lack of space in general and toilets, staff rooms and reception areas were specifically described as being cramped;
- “nowhere to go” – surprisingly, most social activities were explained to take place in the playground;

“What we need is … somewhere to just sit and chill out, where we feel safe and relaxed - a space with places to sit and listen to music, play games or something like that”, “Somewhere you can get something to eat. What about exercise, somewhere to blow off a bit of steam”

- bland interiors – often described as “uninspiring” and “unwelcome”;
- poor or no signage – a few participants wrote a scenario based on getting lost;
- vandalism – especially graffiti, however some wrote about more severe physical damages, such as cutting water pipes or smashed windows.
Possible Solutions

Some believed having something to do would eliminate boredom, and/or facilities of better qualities would demand more respect, as a lack of respect for old, dirty, damaged and uninspiring facilities was identified as one of the causes of vandalism. However, others believed there would always be someone who would continue to vandalise things regardless. Opinions about providing a designated graffiti wall were also divided - with some thinking it would solve the problem, while others believed that graffiti would continue on prohibited surfaces.

Positive Design Features

Participants came up with the following design features that they saw as conducive to creating good internal social spaces;

- Natural lighting, especially skylights and large windows
- Comfort, especially furniture
- Stylish and modern design
- Interesting and unique features
- Calm interior
- “Funky” furniture
- Spaciousness and airiness
- Easy and open access to outdoor space
- Privacy and partitioning of open plan space – “private but still feel open”
One of the participants was a wheelchair user, who pointed out that the majority of the furniture shown in the slides was either impossible or hard to use for wheelchair users.

The participants chose particular social areas to design by drawing, using collage and model making. The majority picked up the “common room” as their choice; while two group’s chose to design corridors and one group chose canteen and another classroom.

While the common room was the most popular choice, the participants identified need for both “quiet chill-out space” and “lively activity space”. Therefore, they either chose just one of these spaces to design, or to partition the common room to accommodate two contrasting needs. One particular group designed a common room accessed via a bridge from the classroom block, suggesting it to be “a place to get away”.

The canteen was not perceived as a social space as the time spent there was often minimum, just enough to eat quickly and leave. This is more of a management issue than spatial one; although those who tackled designing a canteen proposed separate serving counters for different kinds of food as a solution for long queues.

**Priorities**

The need for basic comfort, respect and a variety of spaces were agreed by the group. Other key findings of the workshops were:

**Colours:** The preferred colours for large surfaces, such as wall and floor, were often neutral and/or light, while strong and brighter colours should be considered for furniture and objects.

**Forms:** Designers should consider organic and/or curvy forms for both room and furniture and participant's desire for “modern” design.

**Nature:** Designs should incorporate access to outdoor spaces, interior greenery and windows facing a garden.

**Lighting:** Various, sophisticated artificial lighting (ambient and local) were preferred along with large windows and skylights.

**Open plan and enclosures:** “Spacious” was the word most commonly used to describe their proposals. Therefore most proposed open plan layout, whilst some introduced subtle enclosures and partitioning to define areas; “different spaces but still feel open”.

**Furniture:** Chairs were placed everywhere, suggesting a lack of seating provisions in their existing schools.

**Facilities:** Most commonly mentioned facilities were internet access and facility to listen to music. All games areas included at least one pool table.
Workshop 4     External Social Spaces

Purpose

The main focus of the workshop was to explore what participants wanted from the external social spaces of the new learning centres. The key aims were for participants to:

- assist workshop participants in expressing a vision for the future of external social spaces;
- gain an understanding of what facilities and spaces are required in external areas and what participants considered essential for future learning centres;
- engage participants in creative exercises to express their vision for future school grounds;
- have fun in expressing design ideas

Activity

After an initial introduction, where participants were shown a wide range of landscapes images from industrial to natural, participants listed ‘things’ they thought a learning centre of the future would have. As each idea was announced it was then discussed by the participants and put into priority groups of ‘must haves’, ‘maybes’ and ‘dreams’. This allowed free expression of a variety of ideas that challenged traditional concepts of external space. Participants then modelled their themes in 3D visualisation using a variety of media and materials.

‘Must have’ items

| - Pools for swimming/therapy | - External exhibition spaces for student work |
| - Natural ponds and natural areas | - A café |
| - Eco learning areas | - Amphitheatre |
| - Personalised lockable bike storage | - Comfortable seating |
| - Full multi-use sports pitches | - Mobile phone usage area |
| - Spaces to ‘chill out’ in | - Water features |
| - Outside classroom options | - Interesting and colourful finishes |
| - Performance space | |

Model of a Recreational Lake and Ecological Learning Facility
Summary findings

A key outcome from the exercise above was to group the facilities/spaces into themes. Key themes often encompassed a number of complementary ideas and environments and challenged participants to explore how learning centres of the future would incorporate the following features;

- Nature learning space
- Entrance to a learning centre of the future
- Chill out zones
- Sports action zones
- Technology and information in exterior spaces
- Water recreation area
- Exterior art display and performance spaces
- Future learning places – 2050

Priorities

Scale and appropriateness of design: Participants wanted the design of exterior spaces and the facilities within to be of an appropriate scale for students and be comfortable.

Multi-use areas: Participants identified that certain exterior spaces could have a variety of activities occurring within the one space. Examples of this included:

- Swimming pools could be water features
- Stadium use as gathering places
-
- Nature area could be used for relaxing and learning. One group suggested that the community use a nature area after hours as a leisure space
- Sports facility that cater for a greater diversity of sport and physical challenge while also capable of being used for gatherings and performances (Stadium within the school)
- Performance space that is aligned with exterior art galleries to show student work.

**Information in exterior spaces:** The need for information, whether on large television screens, or on strategically located information terminals was identified with technology. The use of technology such as mobile phones in specially identified areas was seen as a progressive step.

**Environmental sustainability:** The use of best practice sustainable technologies and construction methods in external spaces was illustrated in the models. Solar powered lights, land drainage possibilities, water conservation and specific areas for recycling were all suggested by participants.

**Character and identity:** Character and identity within the external spaces was a focus seen in most groups. The need to make a design statement at key entrances to the learning centres was stated clearly. Participants wished to say that learning places are interesting, fun and promote learning and discovery.

**Safety in exterior spaces:** Safety in almost all themed models was a key concern amongst participants with lighting, surveillance and even wardens being highlighted in proposals.

**Extended use:** The breaking down of barriers to make exterior spaces part of the community through extended use, was seen as positive way of adding value to learning centres and as a means to gain revenue. Examples included having sports facilities which are able to be used after hours by community teams, amphitheatres that can hold events and performances.

**Inter school sharing:** Participants acknowledged that every learning centre can not have every facility they desired and sharing between other learning centres was identified as a way gaining a full compliment of high quality facilities.
Workshop 5 Inspirational Buildings

Purpose

These workshops enabled participants to consider how the new Learning Centres could ‘individualise’ themselves through the use of innovative materials and design solutions. The aim was to allow the participants the opportunity to contribute their views on:

- How current school buildings make them feel
- What places make them feel the most inspired
- Which part of the Learning Centres could have the most ‘inspirational’ impact

Activity

Participants gathered information on how the current school buildings make them feel. They then discussed their first day at school, the good and bad things about their school, and the places, people and things that inspire them. Group discussions then centred around ideas of which physical areas within school buildings that might benefit most from more inspirational design. The areas participants agreed could benefit from inspirational design were then prioritised and constructed through 3D modelling.

Summary Findings

Bad things about current schools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>- Paint falling off walls</th>
<th>- Chewy under table tops</th>
<th>- Furniture bad for posture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Unhygienic and dirty</td>
<td>- Trapped</td>
<td>- Teachers feel isolated in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Canteen not big enough</td>
<td>- Smells</td>
<td>their classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Smelly toilets</td>
<td>- Polycarbonate windows</td>
<td>- Corridors dingy/dark and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Small classrooms</td>
<td>- Bars on windows</td>
<td>narrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not enough toilets</td>
<td>- Vandalism</td>
<td>- Furniture is cold, boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Graffiti</td>
<td>- Computers broken</td>
<td>and uncomfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No places to relax</td>
<td>- Cold</td>
<td>- You get wet travelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Locked out at breaks</td>
<td>- Conflict between ages</td>
<td>between lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No trust</td>
<td>- No shelter</td>
<td>- Too much security</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Good things about current schools included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>- Toilet Attendants</th>
<th>- Sports facilities</th>
<th>- Funny kids</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- After school clubs</td>
<td>- Swimming pool</td>
<td>- Art room is high up and you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Revision groups</td>
<td>- Benches to eat outside</td>
<td>get a good view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Good atmosphere</td>
<td>- Grassed areas</td>
<td>- Sculpture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Good friends/mates</td>
<td>- Computers</td>
<td>- Good teachers and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Access to ICT at breaks</td>
<td>- Trees</td>
<td>- Pond</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Priorities

General Priorities

The main areas of the buildings which participants wanted to see given more inspirational design were common rooms, classrooms, corridors and stairs, furniture, canteens, toilets and receptions. Of these, the most commonly chosen were classrooms, canteens, toilets and entrances/receptions.

Specific Priorities

Design Statement: Knowsley’s school users want respectful design, which places pupils at the core. Above all, pupils and staff wish to feel valued, trusted and safe and to have independence to move around the new Learning Centres.

Furniture: Planners should consider the importance school users place on furniture. Users want comfortable (upholstered) furniture (scaled to different age groups).

Toilets: Planners should consider referencing the type of public toilets found in many of the new large shopping centres. Participants overwhelmingly wanted toilets to be large, clean and staffed by an attendant.

Receptions: Participants wanted to see features such as ponds and fountains in receptions, as well as artwork created by and about the pupils. Cars should not be parked in front of the entrance to the building and statements such as ‘Welcome’ should be incorporated into the design of the space.

Social Space: Participants want “chill out” spaces for respite from the school day.

Services: Maximisation of natural day light, as well as several lighting options is required, and under-floor heating was discussed as an option.
Décor: Carpet rather than resilient flooring was preferred for corridors, with translucent materials and different colours for doors of different subjects. Colours suggested included: Neutral colours for classrooms; blues and greens for chill out spaces; oranges for dinning halls; silver, black and grey for boys toilets and shocking pink and silver for girls toilets. Participants thought that receptions should include strong colours such as orange and blue.

Floor Plans and Fit-outs: Designs should provide flexible spaces and furniture with transition spaces instead of corridors. These can host cafes, ‘sit-off’ spaces, informal learning spaces and storage.
Workshop 6  Sustainability

Purpose

These workshops enabled participants to consider how the new Learning Centres could be more sustainable in terms of their design, the materials used in their construction and how they might be an environmental and educational resource for their local communities. The aim was to allow the participants the opportunity to contribute their views on:

- what sustainability means to them
- issues of sustainability within the existing school environment
- how an inspirational learning centre of the future could have great environmental credentials

Activity

Participants took part in various activities, including a quiz, to discuss the meaning of sustainability and explore sustainability issues within existing school environments. This provided an opportunity to gauge participant’s knowledge of the subject matter as well as providing a starting point for developing a sustainable design brief.

In order to bring together thoughts of sustainability and an aspirational design, participants then built models of their sustainable Learning Centre of the future.

Summary Findings

Sustainable Solutions

- Buildings could significantly reduce heat and light consumption through the use of more glazing, (including sun-pipes), natural ventilation and renewable power sources, such as wind and solar power. Heating it was felt, needed to be far more controllable rather than simply on or off for months at a time;
- Electricity is to be the sole source of energy so as to allow for the use of renewable energy;
− Intelligent (monitoring) control systems to provide efficient use of heat and artificial light (some participants were already aware of such systems in their own schools used to regulate lighting in relation to occupancy);
− A revised menu based around, for example, freshly prepared ingredients and the use re-usable crockery & cutlery in food preparation, was seen as the primary goal for reducing packaging waste. One participant also suggested composting food waste for use on school grounds. More storing work electronically, (with more computers, particularly laptops), recycling and using paper both sides, were all suggested for reduction of wastepaper;
− Improvements in bus services would tempt people away from using cars, as would provision for high quality bike storage and safety.

Sustainable Designs
− Wind turbines & solar panels as key monumental components of the buildings;
− Wind cowls- natural ventilation and pre-heating of in-coming air;
− Natural outdoor spaces with planting and water in contrast to hard landscaping.
− Natural light for learning spaces, integrating a mix of social and chill out spaces;
− Open social space, both indoor and outdoor, little or no use of corridors;
− Recycled materials for construction & landscaping, such as paths made from recycled tyres or trainers;
− Water in landscaping as a means of providing ‘calm’ & tranquil’ space;
− Reed beds for waste water filtration & landscaping;
− Elevated rooms or spaces such as art rooms or a dining space that sat high over the school for views out and integrated with solar collection &/or wind power;
− Rainwater collection;
− Secure bike sheds;
− Recycling bins.

Priorities

Sustainability and inspirational design: Outputs demonstrated a link between ‘sustainable design’ and ‘inspirational space’.

Sustainability and ownership: Involvement of young people in designing, implementing and managing sustainable aspects of the new Learning Centres will give a sense of ownership of space back to the young people.

Symbolism: Whether it’s a green roof, wind turbine or solar cells or use of natural light, participants wanted the environmental aspects of the buildings to proudly celebrate their purpose.

Personal control systems: Having buildings designed to allow users to have some personal control over heating, ventilation and lighting (rather than the current automated/regulated systems), would not only be more efficient and less wasteful, but would also create a more comfortable environment for users.

Natural daylight: To reduce power consumption, design briefs should seek to maximise the use of natural/passive heat, light and ventilation systems.
Workshop 7  Behaviour and Security

Purpose

The purpose of the workshop was to consider how existing architecture/landscape design in schools can inhibit feelings of personal security and promote negative forms of behaviour. The key aims were:

- To enable participants to consider their own personal responses to particular and general examples of architecture and landscape design
- To focus on generic spaces within schools which routinely generate negative feelings and behaviour
- To consider and formulate an effective design strategy to address this.

Activity

The workshop started with a “word power” exercise, which established a common working vocabulary, based upon responses gathered during the architectural tour. These words were then associated by participants with a series of negative and positive images.

We identified the key problem zones within typical school environments and prioritised these before moving on to outline solutions in the form of a “design manifesto” which was then presented to the rest of the workshop and recorded.

Summary Findings

Negative aspects of current schools were;

- accessing school via car parks wasn’t thought to be safe;
- reception areas raised issues of feeling unwelcome, instilled a sense of there being lack of school ownership amongst pupils and this negatively affected a sense of “school pride”.
- poor layout and circulation of dining spaces and limiting personal menu choice and a “filing station” “… pig trough” style approach of some staff members, put pressure on students that fostered poor behaviour.
- the layout and design of existing classrooms and learning areas inhibited the learning process and promoted negative behaviour.
- pressure of time to get to lessons along with poor stair and corridor circulation fostered bad behaviour and resulted in stress and feelings of insecurity amongst participants.
- one way systems were felt to be counterproductive in some instances.
- Issues of accessibility were also identified as a major concern amongst all participants.
- the lack of supervision around both internal and external areas of a school (including toilet areas), was a key issue, however this also needed to be viewed in relation to privacy also being important.
- “behind the bike shed” zones were felt to promote negative feelings, insecurity and bad behaviour.
Priorities

Access areas: Preferred designs for fostering a sense of safety for pupils, staff and visitors would have car and bus access-ways segregated from the main school entrance.

Receptions: Plans should incorporate welcoming reception areas that everyone can use (rather than just a staff and visitors) and that the whole school can feel proud of.

Dining rooms: Ditch the “filling station” concept as these spaces and attitudes created stressful atmospheres conducive to bad behaviour amongst pupils. Create larger open spaces, with better circulation, appropriate colour, natural light and materials and provide more menu options and more options about where and how users can eat and be relaxed.

Classrooms and all learning areas: Designers should consider “themed” rooms, flexible spaces and seating arrangements that directly respond to the classes at hand. They should also consider colour schemes and natural lighting that provide harmonious spaces and encourage active learning. Placing pupil art works on the walls would, according to participants, increase a sense of ownership and pride that would lead to better behaviour and feelings of well being.

Corridors and stairs: Designing in wider circulation systems with clear signage (e.g. colour coded floors), open plan areas (to prevent bottlenecks and allow for passive supervision), will help reduce bad behaviour.

Toilets and changing rooms: A contradiction between issues of supervision and privacy? The solution should form an important part of the weeding out of negative behaviour, but do so while also respecting individual privacy. These rooms should also be constructed with robust but effective materials and use natural rather than artificial lighting.
External recreational areas: External and recreational areas should be easily supervised and allow for flexibility of use. They should also have “weather proofed” recreation zones and plenty of outdoor furniture to provide more useable space and greater choice of activities for users.

Unsupervised Areas: If there are to be unsupervised areas, these should be well light and have murals/pupils artwork on the walls as a means of discouraging “forgotten spaces” and the negative forms of behaviour that are associated with them.
Workshop 8  Heart of the School

Purpose

The aims for these workshops were to discover what might be the existing heart of the school for the pupils and what they may think the heart of the school might be in the learning centres of the future. Our key aims were:

- To identify if Knowsley schools currently have a clearly defined heart
- What pupils would like to be the heart of their new Learning Centres
- What key elements should be incorporated in the heart of a learning centre

Activity

Participants used collage and other art techniques to creatively express their understanding of heart of a school – was the heart of something entirely emotional that referred to people or memories or was it more a physical engine that kept the whole school running? Participants then identified design attributes that would contribute to a good school heart.

Summary Findings

The existing “hearts” were viewed as either the most obvious feature of the school, such as the canteen or reception; the area of best quality area like the City Learning Centre; or those areas of greatest interest to the individual such as the football pitch or music room. However most participants felt the people (pupils, teachers and other staff) represented the true heart of the school.

Students from the same school had different ideas about their school’s physical heart but felt that these spaces did not reflect the emotional heart as often they were unwelcoming, not inclusive spaces and often out of bounds to the pupils!

Responses were often influenced by the activity which took place in the space, for example the Performing Arts Space, or the football field were cited, which seems to reflect the atmosphere and a sense of belonging that is created by the Arts and Sports or the sort of spaces that these activities usually take place in.

The list of existing hearts of schools were as follows: pupils, staff, teachers, atmosphere, people and ethos, school badge and uniform, community, canteen, school hall, head teacher’s office, sports hall, playground, corridors, reception, classrooms, football pitch, and each school’s specialism.

Priorities

A physical heart of the school should be multifunctional, useful, spacious, sociable and modern, of high quality and with calming natural features. Participants wanted designers to ‘think differently’ and desired curved, unusual and wider corridors and walls. Participants were also clear that they did not want a succession of boxes. Specific priorities were as follows.
Reference to nature: A natural feature was very important to all students, either a water feature, such as a pond, waterfall of fountain for soothing sounds, or a green feature such as plants and trees. Natural features were seen as opportunities to “express yourself” or to generate personal calm within the school’s heart even if the physical heart of the school was full of lively atmosphere. A sculpture or bridge feature also complimented these natural elements.

Colour: Colour was also very important to the participants, particularly the desire for multicoloured environments reflecting different moods. Similarly, different textures and building materials were suggested with some students liking the idea of incorporating traditional materials and structures with modern materials and design.

Open Plan: All participants desired plenty of space and complete access for all user groups. The use of etched glass for the school logo was suggested to also serve as glass partitions for an open space feeling.

Welcoming: Designs should also be friendly, not intimidating, but welcoming and encourage people into the school.

Sustainable: Ecological designs were also preferred such as renewable energy power sources and ways to “design in” reductions in paper use (canteens that used natural produce rather than packaged food for example).

Lighting: Good lighting (both natural and artificial) with task lighting in different areas that is adjustable to create different moods.

Furniture: High quality functional, comfortable, colourful furniture was a strong design consideration for participants. They also requested lots of communal/social seating areas and round tables (round tables were felt to be sociable).
Workshop 9  School Identity

Purpose

The main focus of the workshop was to explore how each school is identified by the pupils, staff and the community and to look at which elements will be used or adapted for the new learning place.

The key aims of the workshop were to allow the participants the opportunity to contribute their views on:

- How to create a strong identity for the new learning environment?
- What to take from the existing school?

Activity

After an initial discussion about the ways in which schools are identified, the participants worked in small groups to gather their thoughts and views on a range of commercial logos e.g. Vodafone, Nike, Subway, Cream and others. Participants then spent some time deliberating their opinions on a range of school badges of varying designs before running their own mini-workshops on school badges, school uniforms and the visual impact of school premises (including receptions). Through sketches and drawings, we then explored how these ideas might be incorporated with designs for the Knowsley’s future Learning Centres.

Summary of key points

Preferred Commercial Logos

The preferred logos were those of a simple design with a contrast of two or three colours. The ‘Nike’ logo was said to be particularly effective, yet simple in design.

School Badges

The cartoon and the shield emblem were favoured badge designs. The cartoon design was said to be modern, cheerful, attractive and colourful, and targeted a specific audience. The shield design was traditional, formal and represented the school’s history.

Badge design elements should include:

- Shield emblem to be used as an outline to maintain the traditional element;
- A simple modern design inside the shield outline;
- The actual name of the school instead of the Latin motto;
- Symbols to reflect the activities within the school.
School Uniforms

Reactions to existing school uniforms were generally negative - stuffy, smart, dull, boring, annoying, uncomfortable, formal, dark, navy, black and stiff. Initially many of the younger participants did not agree with wearing a uniform at all, however there was a growing recognition to the positive aspects of school uniforms as the workshops progressed with many participants recognising that uniforms gave a sense of equality, were cost-effective, practical, smart, and provided a sense of school identity.

Those deciding on school uniforms should consider:

- Seasonal uniforms for both summer and winter;
- A polo-shirt and sweatshirt, similar to that of primary schools;
- Badges instead of ties;
- Choice of trousers or skirts for girls;
- No blazers;
- Different colour ties for each year group;
- A choice of four styles to mix and match;
- Having famous designers to work with the pupils on new uniforms.

School Buildings and Grounds

The planners and Architects of the Learning Centres themselves should consider;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exterior</th>
<th>Interior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Contrasting shapes and curved walls</td>
<td>- Brighter key colours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sculptures and artwork</td>
<td>- Spacious rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Soft landscaping and fountains</td>
<td>- Curved corridors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hidden car parks</td>
<td>- Moveable walls and screens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Replace boundary fence with friendly alternative</td>
<td>- Good lighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Open areas</td>
<td>- Glass walls with frosted design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Elevated signpost, as the example seen outside the ‘World Museum of Liverpool’</td>
<td>- Comfy chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Music to set the mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Lockers for each individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Receptions

Reception areas were considered to be particularly important spaces for establishing a positive school identity and should therefore be clearly identified, accessible to all and be informative, friendly and welcoming.

Receptions should incorporate the following facilities and design aspects:
### Reception Facilities
- Leaflets
- Maps
- Touch Screen information points
- Changeable advertising screens
- Clear signboards with artistic fonts
- Plants, fountains and artwork
- Pupils to assist and welcome visitors

### Reception Designs
- A spacious and open area
- Counters of various levels
- Bright Colours

### Priorities

**School Badge:** Planners should consider a mixture of traditional symbols (such as a shield) incorporating more modern symbols that reflect the particular activities of each Learning Centre. Participants also preferred actual school names in preference to Latin motto’s.

**School wardrobes:** A “mix and match” seasonal school wardrobe would give more choice and individuality and create a sense of individual ownership over the uniform.

**Landscaping:** Soft landscaping and water features, and replacing boundary fences with friendly alternatives were seen as potentially positive symbols of a new Learning Centres Identity.

**Artwork:** Artwork was seen as giving out positive messages about a schools identity and so external areas should, in particular, have more artwork on display as this is the aspect of the school that is most visible to the surrounding community.

**Building Design:** The use of curves rather than harder shapes (typical of many of the existing school) for both building facades and internal corridors, as design features appealing to many participant’s, would help foster a sense of pride / ownership of the new centres.
Workshop 10  Community Use

Purpose

The main focus of the workshop was to explore how the participants perceived the potential of the new Learning Centres to offer extended school provision. The workshop provided the opportunity for participants to contribute their views on:

- Their favourite community buildings and what lessons they can provide for Knowsley’s new Learning Centres
- The current and potential users of their existing schools
- What the community will need from the new learning centres

Activity

Participants worked in a single group and then in break out mini-workshops to identify their favourite community buildings, current and potential school users and the type of facilities extended school users might require. Participants then undertook art-based projects including the drawing of plans for their ideal schools. The outcomes of these works were then shared amongst the group with each group explaining what they did and why. Participants then discussed any common themes and drew out any issues that were a priority for the group.

Summary Findings

Favourite Features of Community Buildings

- Large sports stadia
- Aquarium
- Sculptures
- Water fountains
- Modern design

- Natural light was very important as was the use of glass and transparent effects (e.g; mirrors).
- Open spaces for communal meeting areas (internal and external) and receptions
Current and Potential School Users

The following list is not illustrative of users in all schools. For example, many of the groups were only in schools who currently offered extended services. The list may therefore more closely reflect Knowsley’s extended schools policy, than had the same exercise been done with other schools not offering extended school services. It demonstrates therefore that the Borough is advanced with some schools but needs to make this provision comprehensive.

Current Users were identified as;

- Primary schools
- Other secondary schools
- Mums and dads
- Sports groups
- Adult education
- Parents
- Cleaners
- Teachers
- Librarians
- Physios/school nurse
- SEN provision
- The elderly
- Young children (up to 6)

Potential Users (the above plus);

- Disabled groups - quality facilities and services needed for equal opportunity and access - not just lip service.
- Students from other schools
- Pregnant women (antenatal)
- Emergency services
- Local businesses
- Community health groups
- Gifted and talented students
- Mothers and toddlers
## Potential Community Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports facilities</th>
<th>Health facilities</th>
<th>Multi Media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Fitness centre, swimming pools, Jacuzzi, sauna, spa  
- Skate park  
- Astroturf - including floodlights and not just for football  
- Football pitches  
- Quality changing rooms-essential!  
- Tennis courts  
- Hydrotherapy pool  
- Drop in health facility | - Chiropractor  
- Childcare facilities  
- Healthy eating service-community café with cyber access  
- Baby changing facilities  
- Toilets! Quality toilets were seen as essential. Perhaps different toilets for adult groups and pupils but all to be of high quality, clean, modern (not plaster walls) and with good access (ie; not always locked) | - Cinema (replicating FACT in Liverpool)  
- Performing Arts stage  
- Theatre  
- Adult learning areas  
- Family room  
- Full access!! eg.; wheelchairs, pushchairs, prams  
- A well advertised and marketed centre  
- Retail areas - bookshop, hairdressers  
- Day care for elderly groups  
- Recording studio - used for curriculum based work and local bands  
- Library |

### Priorities

#### Curriculum links:
It was recognised that many extended school facilities could be used for both curriculum and community.

#### Inclusive:
Extended school services need to cater for different cultural and religious groups.

#### Authority wide provision:
It was generally agreed that all schools should have a quality minimum standard of extended school provision but specialist schools should offer enhanced provision available for all the wider community.

#### Extended specialist schools:
A specialist sports college, for example, may have an indoor athletics track to work with gifted and talented athletes which all schools could not be expected to have.

#### Good Signage/Information:
There should be attractive, accurate and informative signage (plasma screens for example) around the buildings to make a welcoming environment and provide useful information.

#### Security:
Designers need to consider adequate security as essential because of their being both adults and pupils on site at the same time. Corridors, for example, need to be wide and curved with no sharp bends or places to hide.
Section 4

Conclusions and Next Steps

The workshops provided a rich source of data. The wide-ranging discussions and practical activities raised hard design, and softer management and organisational issues, for the schools to consider. Below is a summary of the main issues arising from the process, they are listed under the headings of the festival workshops, as well as some generic design principles and some clearly management related ones. There was generally a consensus of conclusions reached in the various workshops and, as conversations inevitably overlapped, some conclusions sit under more than one of the workshop headings.

Generic Design Principles

- The new Learning Centres must have respectful designs – pupils want to be treated like VIP’s and given choices as they experience their school day. Specifically they wish to enter through the main entrance;

- The new Learning Centres should have wider or preferably, no corridors (they are ‘scarey’), transition spaces, quiet individual workspaces (for homework and private study) and bigger classrooms which are adaptable and multi functional;

- A sense of ownership and pride is important – the festival started the process of participation in design and pupils want to remain involved and feel that other stakeholders within the communities should also be drawn into the process;

- There is a vision that the buildings themselves will teach and are a learning opportunity;

- On the whole, pupils in particular are conscious of maintenance issues and show concern over dirt and vandalism. They want to see the use of more innovative materials and would like to do away with corners, plasterboard and brickwork in favour of curves, wipe clean resilient surface products and more natural construction materials;

- There is a desire for more passive supervision that designs could help facilitate by the use of more transparent materials including glass and more open-plan and shared spaces;

- There is a need for very responsive heating and ventilation that can be controlled in individual spaces, as different teaching styles require different atmospheres;

- Attention to design and functionality of outdoor spaces is vital, as both pupils and teachers see this as having the potential to be an extended learning environment. In addition, pupils needs for social interaction space includes the outside spaces of their learning environment;
Generally, there needs to be more space for informal interaction between pupils and adults alike;

Furniture in the new Learning Centres must be radically different to current school furniture. Knowsley’s young people are ‘expert consumers’ who are used to experiencing comfort and flexibility in furniture in environments in the high street and in their leisure time. They are able to talk expertly about ergonomics and their needs for different types of furniture in different learning situations, as well as the difference between an 11 year old and a 16 year old’s physique. Above all, they expect a higher level of comfort than currently experienced;

The use of colour seems important, as current facilities are considered ‘dull’. On the whole the use of neutral colours and white for the majority of walls was considered best, with stronger colours on floors and in the furniture and some accent walls;

Public art as well as art created by and about the pupils is considered to be important, as are school specific features, such as water features, world class’ sports and arts facilities;

There was a wide understanding about access for all and it was strongly articulated that the new Learning Centres must exceed statutory regulations in regard to DDA and building regulations. There were comments about ‘attitudinal’ approaches to inclusive design;

Management Related Principles

Pupils and staff expressed that there needs to be more trust in the future and that would involve pupils being allowed access to the internal spaces during breaks and lunch time. Many adults and pupils felt like they were in a ‘prison’;

Lunchtimes are a particularly stressful time of day for all inhabitants of the existing schools. Thought needs to be given to the menu choices, as well as the quality of preparation. This area of school life in itself warrants further specific consultation with the key stakeholders. At present, the practicalities of feeding the whole school during one lunch break is causing considerable stress to all. Pupils are not experiencing any ‘down time’ and they continually expressed that this affects behaviour and concentration in the afternoon;

Toilets were the most discussed area of the schools and the suggested solutions were varied, ranging from en-suite toilets in each classroom to huge fully serviced ‘shopping centre’ style areas. However, the most common solution was that of supervision coupled with a change in design. It is not just the condition of toilets which upsets the pupils, but the risk of intimidation whilst using them and they feel that this would be best solved by having better and constant supervision that allowed the toilets to be open throughout the day;
All participants felt that their schools consumed too much without thought for recycling, and all were aware that Knowsley as a borough has a strong commitment to becoming ‘green’ (as per the ‘How Green are You?’ campaign).

Of particular concern was the packaging used for the school dinners as well as general paper consumption and food waste.

Learning Spaces

Participants showed a wide understanding of the different ways in which they learn and this must be reflected in the new buildings. The most favoured spaces in which to learn included – at home, outside or in a library, with typical school classroom layouts not considered at all favourable.

The key components of the ideal learning space were agreed to be comfort, tranquillity, stimulating colour and warmth. Other features such as carpet, upholstered seating, different lighting options and glass or translucent walls were also identified as key requirements.

A key point made in several workshops was that classrooms should have a subject identity which may involve the use of a specific colour carried throughout the school as a navigation tool, as well as specific decorations and components or ‘artefacts’ relating to the subject.

ICT and Communication

There was agreement across these workshops that ICT offered the potential to transform the learning environment, as well as to assist with greater feelings of independence within the new Learning Centres.

Predominantly, there was a need for a better standardisation of equipment and ICT networks to enable work to be carried out at various places within the buildings and beyond. Issues around security of the internet as well as training and support were identified, and the necessity for security of equipment must be balanced with creating a suitable atmosphere in which to learn. Rooms with bars or shutters on windows that are also dark and stuffy (traditional ICT rooms) are not conducive to learning.

The basic ICT shopping list includes Interactive whiteboards in every classroom, laptops for use in school and possibly out of school and high quality broadband internet connections throughout. The use of memory sticks for pupils was considered a safer option than carrying laptops.

Internal Social Spaces

The fundamental message from these workshops was that there is a lack of social space and most areas in the existing schools are not big enough. There is a definite need for the creation of spaces to meet, ‘sit off and chill out’ and to feel ‘safe and relaxed’.
All participants recognise that the school day is made more stressful by the lack of social space and that bad behaviour is heightened by this. Vandalism,

particularly graffiti is considered to be a product of boredom and there was a belief that better quality facilities would command more respect from users.

Key requirements included better signage, natural lighting, comfort (especially furniture), space, access to outdoor space, access for all users. Other considerations were the use of organic forms for both rooms and furniture, inclusion of moveable partitions to create smaller spaces when needed within open plan areas.

External Social Spaces

Participants had very high demands of their external spaces, and many of the themes from the other workshops occurred here too. They expect the external spaces of the new Learning Centres to offer them a wide variety of functions, from social to learning, sport and arts.

A key theme was that external space offers an opportunity for learning; about nature, sustainability and also as an informal teaching space for other subjects. There were sophisticated requests for the use of technology in outside spaces too, with information boards and interactive features as well as mobile phone zones (with the suggestion that phones are blocked inside the building).

Other priorities included water features, external display and performance spaces, chill out zones and separate high quality sport zones. There was a clear understanding that external spaces offered a fantastic opportunity for shared community use, particularly out of school hours and that outside areas would have several functions. The use of sustainable technologies and construction methods was hi-lighted as something that would be visible in the external spaces, including solar power, recycling points, water conservation and land drainage solutions.

Knowsley’s new Learning Centres will be interesting, fun and promote learning and discovery and the entrances to the buildings need to reflect this and their individual character.

Inspirational Buildings

Participants feel very strongly about the quality of their environment, their reference points are wide and varied, including places they have visited in the UK and abroad and places they see in the media. Their expectations regarding comfort, quality and finish are high and well informed.

The main areas that workshop participants focused on bringing inspiration to were toilets, receptions, learning spaces and common rooms.
The common themes that emerged were the use of transparent materials to allow passive supervision and sight of varied activities which would build a sense of pride, that all pupils should be able to use the main reception area and that this should reflect the history as well as the future of learning in that building.

As in other workshops, there was an emphasis on the use of comfortable and varied furniture, natural light, flexible spaces and more use of colour and texture.

**Sustainability**

- Participants all appeared to have an awareness of the basic issues of sustainability and they were vocal about the failings of the existing schools in this aspect.
- The key priorities which were set included the three R's, Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, use of natural resources such as daylight (through use of sun-pipes), solar heat, green roofs, natural ventilation.
- Specific requests included the creation of outdoor teaching spaces, individual lockable bike sheds, water features to create calm, use of recycled building materials such as recycled rubber pathways, gabions and some really innovative energy production options such as the ‘friction slide’.

**Behaviour and Security**

- The main areas of school buildings which were discussed by participants as having behaviour and security problems were those also covered in the Inspirational Buildings workshops. These workshops confirmed the belief that the design will have the ability to impact upon behaviour in the new Learning Centres.
- The main areas were, dining rooms, classrooms, corridors and stairs, receptions, toilets and external spaces. It was also hi-lighted that supervision would need to be resolved as well as physical design.
- Open plan solutions and multi-functional transitional spaces instead of corridors were favoured.
- It was also felt essential to separate car access from pupil and visitor access.
- The new Learning Centres should have a central reception point that the whole school uses and feels pride in.

**Heart of the School**

- The significant outcome of this workshop was that at the onset of each session, grasping the concept of the ‘heart of the school’ was difficult for both adults and pupils. This reflects the fact that most of the existing schools do not have clearly
defined or recognisable ‘hearts’ that are physical spaces, for many it was the
other people in the school which created this centre.

There was a definite desire for the creation of a physical representation of the
heart and soul of the new Learning Centres that is generally a multi-functional
space, sociable, modern with calming natural features.

The priorities for this space included a ‘green’ feature such as plants and trees,
use of strong colours and textures, an open plan approach and the use of
transparent and translucent materials and curves. Specific solutions such as art
galleries, balconies, cyber cafes, history of the school and lots of information
points were also requested.

School Identity

Pupils would like to have greater involvement in the design of all of these
aspects. There is a particular dislike of all the current uniforms and although
some of the younger participants initially suggested having no uniforms, the
discussions eventually led to a consensus that there was a value in having them.
A school ‘wardrobe’ would give more choice and individuality.

The identity of the school building and its external image would be improved by
the use of more external artwork, soft landscaping and water features, no cars in
front of the building and the use of curves rather than harder shapes.
Participants requested the use of ICT and good professionally produced graphics
throughout the school as a navigation tool.

Community Use

The ideas put forward for additional facilities generally fell into the categories of
sports, health and multi-media/arts.

There was a desire for all of these facilities to be used for both curriculum and
community use and a need to cater for different cultural and religious groups as
well as ensuring that all facilities provided open access for all.

Recommended next steps for Knowsley BSF team include:

For School Works to make a presentation on the outcomes contained in this
report to the Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council to allow the conclusions
and recommendations to be discussed and agreed;

To work to develop criteria against which to judge potential Bidders, based on the
outcomes of this report;

Include this report, or an agreed digest of it, in the documentation provided to the
Private Sector Bidders, and invites bidders to respond to the conclusions in their
bids;
Knowsley to identify its own priorities for consultation strategies to ensure the involvement of all stakeholders at appropriate points in the process;

Consider the use of other tools to ensure good school design, for example, Design Quality Indicators;

Consider developing the material gathered as part of this process for an exhibition to celebrate the excellent work and promote ongoing debate;

Consider the specific management related issues which have been raised by participants and quickly carry out further consultation regarding these in order to inform the brief to Bidders. This includes lunchtime issues;

To set in place specific projects to capture the history of each existing school;

To consider launching a school logo and motto competition
### Annex A

**Process Team Timetable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 April 05</td>
<td>School Works Meet with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough planning meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 April 05</td>
<td>Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council introduces the process to Head Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 - 20 April 05</td>
<td>Lead facilitator school visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 April 05</td>
<td>School Works meeting with head teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 April 05</td>
<td>Process information distributed to schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 April 05</td>
<td>Confirmation of process team</td>
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<tr>
<td>02 May 05</td>
<td>School Works to issue process brief</td>
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<tr>
<td>06 May 05</td>
<td>Process team briefing session</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 May 05</td>
<td>Tour of inspirational architecture in Liverpool</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-26 May 05</td>
<td>School Design Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 May 05</td>
<td>Process team Debrief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 05</td>
<td>Draft Report to Knowsley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Campbell Square

**Who uses it and what do they do?**
- People who want to relax
- Workers on lunch-break needing food and drink
- The public, to rest & have a meal

**What did you think when you first saw it?**
- It was a bit like Spain
- Excited but curious
- Trees are nice, a warmer feel

**How did it make you feel?**
- Pleased because it is clean
- Open, happy, welcoming
- Accepted

**What would be good about working in or visiting this building?**
- The atmosphere is relaxing
- I think the greenery is very nice and makes me feel slightly better

**What would be bad about working in or visiting this building?**
- It hasn’t much colour to it
- Litter, benches, dirty
- Noisy

### Empire Theatre Extension

**Who uses it and what do they do?**
- Performances, parties, etc.
- Actors for plays
- Public and workers

**What did you think when you first saw it?**
- Good use of space
- Excellent view, clean, bright
- It looks good. A little strange – it is an old building and a new one

**How did it make you feel?**
- It made me feel happy because I wasn’t hot and stuffy and it had a good view
- Happy, cheerful, welcoming
- Ready to work

**What would be good about working in or visiting this building?**
- Really light nice use of vibrant colours, relaxing chairs, frosted glass brings different coloured light in
- It had lots of different materials and lovely different colours. It was really clean.
- Benches inside. Colourful stairs! Artwork, lifts for people with special needs.

**What would be bad about working in or visiting this building?**
- It wouldn’t be a good place to have computers, can’t block out light
- Might get lost. Not much security. Graffiti
- Can’t be used by several groups
**Metropolitan Cathedral and Grounds**

Who uses it and what do they do?
- Place of worship
- Anybody who wants to come
- Those who believe in Christ or people who want to know Jesus

What did you think when you first saw it?
- How beautiful
- WOW!
- I'm gonna run up the stairs

How did it make you feel?
- I felt small when I saw this and it felt empty
- It made me feel happy to know that people go to the cathedral

What would be good about working in or visiting this building?
- Made me feel important
- It is a big place and lots of people come to meet every week

What would be bad about working in or visiting this building?
- Too many stairs
- Nothing
- I felt very small and very intimidated by the scenery and the area

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**Williamson Square**

Who uses it and what do they do?
- Everyone, children for fun
- Shoppers and walkers
- General public, shoppers, to walk through and sit and chat

What did you think when you first saw it?
- Amazed
- Aaaagh great!
- Wow, amazed no, graffiti

How did it make you feel?
- It made me feel happy to be there
- Happy the sun was out

What would be good about working in or visiting this building?
- It looks funny and enjoyable
- The fountain, no graffiti, the businesses, the pipes are not on show. Seat, everything.
- Fountain water is relaxing

What would be bad about working in or visiting this building?
- Nothing
- When it's windy the waterfall gets you wet
- I think the fast food stall is bad it makes it look untidy
- Dark dull colours
**Fact**

Who uses it and what do they do?
- Local people to eat
- Multi media centre/cinemas/galleries

What did you think when you first saw it?
- Nice trendy
- Messy, untidy yard, building lovely. Excited
- The scrolling message caught my eye. I like the sound going in.

How did it make you feel?
- Not nice, but then astonished
- Uncomfortable, closed
- Made me feel like I was in the future

What would be good about working in or visiting this building?
- It was sci-fi and high tec
- Very modern built- in cinema
- The atmosphere, the comfortable area, the quietness

What would be bad about working in or visiting this building?
- The outside of the building looks like an office compared to the inside
- Too formal with the squares
- Not many signs to tell you where you are going

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**Lime Street Station**

Who uses it and what do they do?
- Lots of people use the train station to get to different places
- Tourists, workers travellers
- People to get around England

What did you think when you first saw it?
- Massive
- Cool because of the pictures on the glass. Trains are fun. Colourful.
- Hectic

How did it make you feel?
- Made me feel welcomed
- A bit excited everyone’s going places
- A little scared because you never know if a train is coming to get you

What would be good about working in or visiting this building?
- Lots happening. It can accommodate lots of people. The fact it is a shed.
- I like the speakers and the pictures on the wall. The walls are transparent which is good

What would be bad about working in or visiting this building?
- It is noisy and hectic
- Hard to keep clean, noise, heat
- No bins
St George’s Plateau and St John’s Garden Square

Who uses it and what do they do?
- Tourists take pictures. Artists paint paintings.
  Skateboarders
- Used to be a court and now is used for functions and conferences
- People use it to relax and go there for a quiet time

What did you think when you first saw it?
- Proud, happy to learn about it. It was the Wow factor
- Powerful and posh
- I felt like I wanted to go inside the building

How did it make you feel?
- Small amazed wow excited
  Like it was going to fall on me

- Good, strong, relaxed, safe, loyal, proud, flags, British

What would be good about working in or visiting this building?
- You feel safe when you work here you feel special
- Clean, important special
- It makes a statement about wealth power and history

What would be bad about working in or visiting this building?
- Trees although nice block view
- It would be dull and very cold because of the stone
  It is littered very badly and makes it look poorly kept

World Museum Liverpool

Who uses it and what do they do?
- It is a learning facility
- The public and they look at the museum pieces
- For all ages and for people here and all over the world. Mostly scientists

What did you think when you first saw it?
- It is lovely big and welcoming
  It was really nice and there was lots of information boards
- Big Boss modern and old

How did it make you feel?
- Proud of Liverpool
  Proud interested welcomed user friendly
  I felt I wanted to explore the grounds and find out

What would be good about working in or visiting this building?
- Touch screen, nice floor Open spaces artifacts sounds around us, films, tells you how to get to places.
- Extremely informative main entrance. Impressive layout and décor. Excellent stairways and lift.
- There is a really good atmosphere you can learn while you work and earn money.

What would be bad about working in or visiting this building?
- It's very big and a lot of ground to cover
  Nothing. Entrance perhaps? Boring old building new grey steel door, mix but not match
Wolstenholm Square

Who uses it and what do they do?
- Lots of people go to relax here, clean, gathering area
- Young people, hen and stag nights, people out partying
- Everyone uses this space

What did you think when you first saw it?
- I thought it was fun, colourful
- Modern exciting (but didn’t know what it was for)
- I wanted to see it at night

How did it make you feel?
- Closed in. Wow
- Like a kid having fun, calm, happy
- It gave me a buzz and made me feel excited

What would be good about working in or visiting this building?
- Public art, trees, pleasure rooms, artwork, greenery
- Wanting to see it at night when it is lit up, colours!
- You come here to make you smile

What would be bad about working in or visiting this building?
- Closed in. Bad View. Scruffy
- All the graffiti on the walls
- The surrounding buildings were a bit shabby

Rope Walks, Art House and St Peter’s Square

Who uses it and what do they do?
- General public sit and chat
- Students, skaters and citizens
- Local people use it, it’s safe. Sit down and chill

What did you think when you first saw it?
- Grotty
- Modern, probably be knocked down in twenty years time
- Metal box with windows

How did it make you feel?
- It made me feel relaxed and calm
- Imprisoned like the trees. Cold
- It made me feel fresh and happy

What would be good about working in or visiting this building?
- Nice place to sit off and chill
- Time out place to escape. Nice in the sun, good chairs
- It would be good to visit this building because it looks very impressive and important

What would be bad about working in or visiting this building?
- It’s outside and it’s cold and windy
- The Bin Outside. And dirty. Leftovers from night. Terrible view.
Annex C

School Works Design Festival Participants

**Brookfield**
- Mark Ireland
- Melissa Hampson
- Simon Maina
- Stephanie Hall
- Connor Irvine
- Chynna Browne
- Michael Clements
- Jack Glover
- Shay Sowlis
- Abbi-Leigh Morgan
- Margaret Gilbert
- Helen James
- John McGee

**St Thomas Becket**
- Kayleigh Allen
- Sally Carr
- Rebecca Fitzsimmons
- Carl Geraghty
- Daniel Heffy
- Katherine Morray
- Paul McPartland
- Daniel Oakes
- Christina Reynolds
- Ms Edwina Evans

**Higher Side Comprehensive School**
- Michael Harnwell
- Amanda Coburn
- Jamie Hudspith
- Lee Weaver
- Stephanie James
- Jenna Hewitt
- Emma Weldon
- Jennifer Wright
- Jay Edwards
- Mr Dave Newton

**St Edmund of Canterbury**
- Adam Baker
- Ben Mohammed
- Chloe Gilgannon
- Michael Severs
- Stephanie Wittenburg
- David Dodd
- Carly Evans
- Natalie Barlow
- Taryn Davies
- Ms Sharon Bignall
- Ms Tracy Blackett

**Bowring Comprehensive School**
- Jamie Flynn
- Emma Hughes
- Jon Hodgson
- Joanne Rutherford
- Gillian Smith
- Joanne Boyle
- Ryan Porter
- Chris Ford
- Stephen Haugh
- Mr Andy Cosgrove
- Mrs Irene Tuzio

**Ruffwood**
- David Ashcroft
- Leah Crane
- Demi Johnson
- Faye Jones
- Naomi Kingsbury
- Ryan Lyons
- Jordon Messham
- Jade Naylor
- Robert Schofield
- Ms Lisa Davies
St Edmund Arrowsmith  
Anita Harry  
Peter Meadows  
Josh Colfar  
Nicky Ginetti  
Callum Fearnley  
Billy Richards  
Rebecca Campbell  
Tony McCarthy  
Ashleigh Cummins  
Ms Smith  
Mr Campbell

Knowsley Hey School  
Mark Jordan  
Anthony Barlow  
Lorren Donnachie  
Megan Edwards  
Melissa Molyneux  
Owen Doran  
Summer Watson  
Neil Webster  
Ms McDaid  
Mr Tom Roscoe

All Saints  
Megan Campbell  
Andrew Scicluna  
David Jones  
Adele Humphreys  
Colin Jackson  
Thomas Hamer  
Dominique Appleton  
Alexandra Wareing  
Anthony Hines.  
Mr Darren Perry

Halewood  
Charlotte Dover  
Hannah Leadbetter  
Daniel Cunnah  
Nile Jones  
Tim Holmes  
Alexandra Sheriff  
Erica Davies  
Dale Dawkes  
Lyndsey Collins  
Ms Dawn Bell

Prescot  
Sophie Foo  
Hannah Kemp  
Laura Owens  
Lyndsey Moss  
Rachael Dennet  
Rachel Ward  
Charlotte Kenyon  
Alex Johnson  
Jessica James  
Sophie Taylor  
Ms Becky Myers
Annex D

School Works Process Team

Facilitators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Workshop Number</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liz Malcolm</td>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Learning Spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Wilton</td>
<td>Communication Matters</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ICT and Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mari Motomura</td>
<td>Fluid</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Internal Social Spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leighton Pace</td>
<td>Levitt Bernstein</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>External Social Spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Stewart</td>
<td>Team a go-go</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Inspirational Buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Threlfall</td>
<td>Team a go-go</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Jones, Steven Boyland</td>
<td>Team a go-go</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Behaviour and Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma Bush</td>
<td>Knowsley School and Community Arts Service</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Heart of the School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen James</td>
<td>Knowsley Teacher</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>School Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Caldecott</td>
<td>Knowsley PE and School Sports Service</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Community Use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project Champions

Mike Rees               Knowsley Metropolitan District Council
Sue Johnston            Knowsley Metropolitan District Council
Jayne Clough            Knowsley Metropolitan District Council

School Works Project Team

Hugh Dames              Project Manager
Kate Stewart            Lead Facilitator
Beth Gladstone          Projects Officer/Researcher
Ronan Leyden            Projects Assistant