

DESIGN NOTE: 01

Interim Workshop Results

19.05.25

ST CLEMENT'S SCHOOL



A wider aerial view of Dingwall, Easter Ross, looking West
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Introduction

Firstly, NORR would like to thank The Highland Council for the opportunity to contribute to this important project through the development of this interim stakeholder engagement report. This document captures the early stages of our involvement in exploring the future of St Clement's School and reflects the collaborative engagement undertaken so far with the school communities.

During our initial involvement, we have entered a valuable period of discovery - listening, learning, and beginning to understand the unique educational environment at St Clement's, as well as the hopes and priorities of those who learn and work there. Our involvement to date has been shaped by interactive sessions with staff, parents, carers, and pupils, which have helped identify important insights about the current school experience and aspirations for the future.

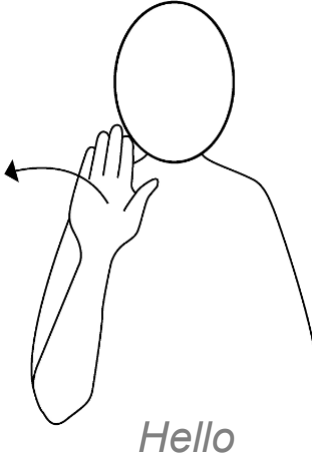
This report summarises the initial engagement activity and outlines emerging themes that will help shape the next phase of work. It is intended as a foundation for continued dialogue - one that keeps the voices of pupils, staff, and the wider community at the heart of the briefing and future design process.

The engagement programme has had a strong and encouraging start, marked by the successful delivery of two well-attended interactive workshops with the St Clement's school community. These sessions brought together staff, parents, and carers in a positive and forward-looking atmosphere, demonstrating a shared ambition to create a school environment that fully supports the diverse needs and aspirations of its learners. The enthusiasm and commitment shown by both staff and families reflect a deep investment in the future of the school. Their constructive contributions have already helped shape the emerging vision for what a new St Clement's School could become - highlighting the potential that meaningful engagement holds in delivering a design that is truly reflective of its community.

In recognition of the importance of considering all potential options and stakeholders, the engagement programme has also included a session with Dingwall Primary School pupils to understand their thoughts and aspirations for a new learning environment. Establishing their voice, alongside that of the St Clement's community, early in the process is a key step in supporting inclusive decision-making, particularly should the co-location option be progressed in the next phase.

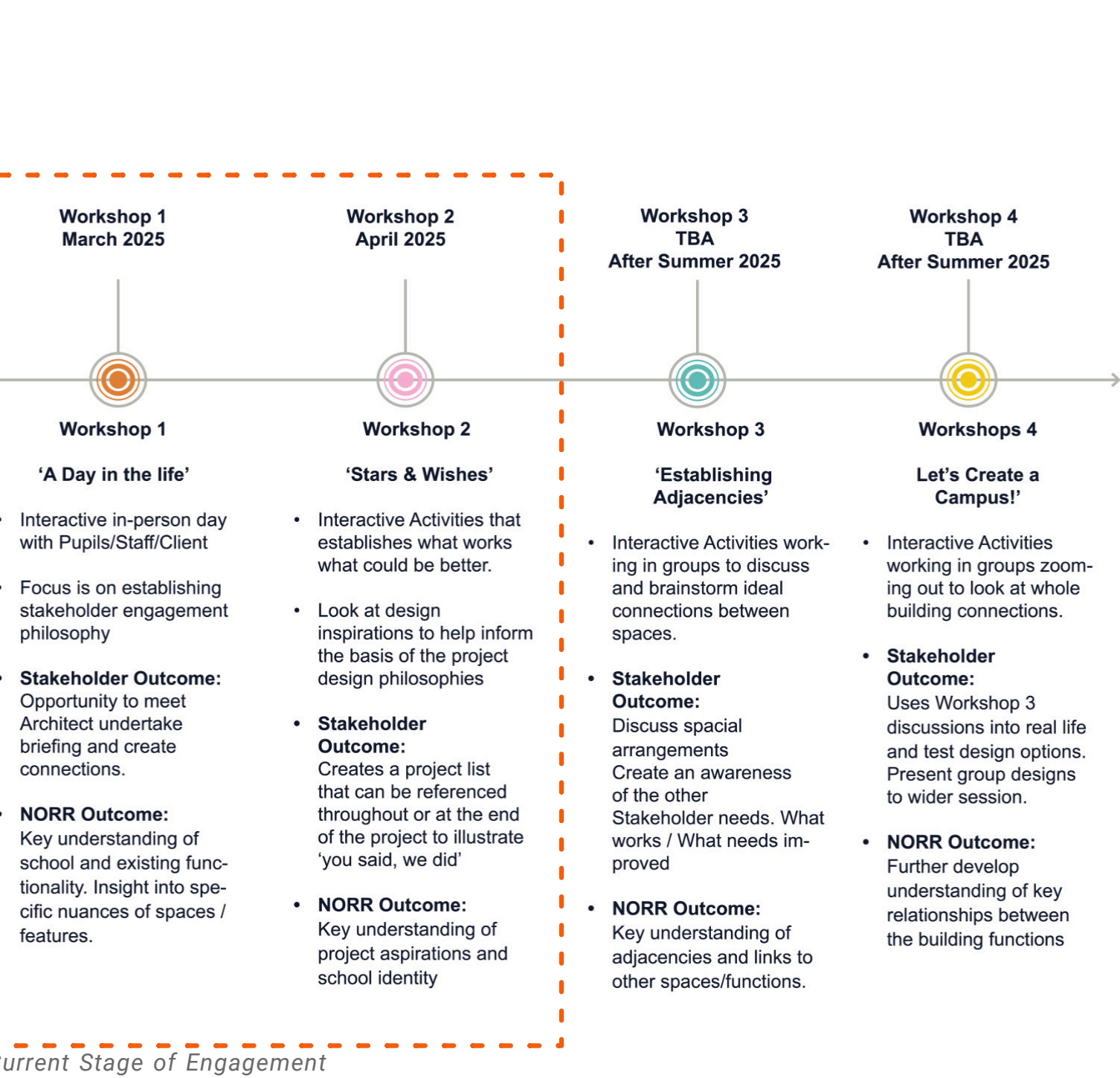
A crucial aspect of this engagement has been the inclusion of pupil and school voice. Activities with young people and staff to date have offered valuable insight into the daily life of both St Clement's and Dingwall Primary, helping to lay a strong foundation for the next stage of work. These perspectives will continue to play a central role as the project progresses, with the next phase of stakeholder engagement planned for after the summer holidays.

Together, these early engagement efforts have set a positive and collaborative tone for the journey ahead. It is evident that The Highland Council recognises the value of listening to - and learning from - the school communities involved. These initial steps highlight the importance of ongoing dialogue in shaping a proposal that reflects the hopes, values, and needs of the whole community.



Introduction :

Stakeholder Timeline | Plan - Briefing Period



Stakeholder Plan

Strong and meaningful engagement with the school community is central to the success of any project, and is especially important for St Clement's School. This section sets out an early approach to working with stakeholders as the briefing process continues, building on the positive relationships and insights developed so far.

The initial timeline outlines how we plan to continue to involve pupils, staff, families, and wider partners during the initial briefing period in a way that is inclusive, respectful, and transparent. It provides a flexible framework to support ongoing dialogue, helping to ensure that all voices remain at the heart of future decisions as the project progresses.

An extended version of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be developed during the briefing period. This will outline a comprehensive strategy - from concept through to construction - ensuring that stakeholder voices are embedded across all stages of the project.

What we need to establish

Establish Stakeholder groups:

An early decision will need to be made around the structure of stakeholder engagement. Should a single, representative group be formed—bringing together voices from across the school community - or should engagement be carried out with a series of distinct groups (e.g. staff, pupils, families, and external partners) through multiple targeted sessions? The approach selected will shape the rhythm and scale of the wider engagement programme, and must balance inclusivity with practicality

Establish the Outcomes of the Engagement :

To ensure that each session delivers meaningful insight, it is important to define the intended outcomes of the engagement. The goal is not to meet a quota of sessions, but to create space for valuable, informative conversations. Flexibility within the engagement process will be essential - responding to the needs of participants and allowing for refinement along the way to support deeper understanding and better design outcomes.

Establish the Strategy:

Once the structure and objectives of engagement have been agreed, the overall strategy should be developed in more detail. This includes aligning planned activities with key programme milestones and identifying opportunities for key stakeholder events. This step ensures the engagement process remains focused and purposeful, while supporting project timelines.

Establish the Brief:

A detailed breakdown of the engagement strategy will support the development of a clear and well-informed brief. Insights gathered through early engagement will directly influence the initial design responses, ensuring that community needs and aspirations are embedded from the outset.

Establish Stakeholder Management:

To support a coordinated and transparent engagement process, it is important to agree how feedback will be captured, reviewed, and shared. This includes confirming the format for reporting engagement outcomes and ensuring alignment with project delivery deadlines. There should also be agreement on whether a project board or steering group is required to oversee stakeholder engagement and maintain momentum throughout the process.

Introduction :

Stakeholder Timeline | Plan - Briefing Period

Proposed Stakeholder Groups (Briefing Stage)

Staff – St Clement's School & Dingwall Primary:

- Ensure representation from staff across all stages and areas of provision.
- Include voices from facilities management, support staff, and administrative teams to capture a full operational perspective.
- Consider including Early Years staff, either in joint sessions or parallel discussions, to support a holistic understanding of all learner needs.

Early Years Practitioners:

- Involve a cross-section of the Early Years team to reflect the range of experiences and roles within the setting.
- A mixed group approach can help surface the varied challenges and opportunities within Early Years provision.
- There may also be value in seeking Early Years parents input during the engagement process.

Pupils Dingwall Primary:

- Option to create a small group or class base engagement to gain pupil voice to participate in the later stages of the project - e.g Artwork and design features such as playground features.
- Consider forming a core working group of pupils who can contribute, supported by broader class-based curriculum engagement for wider insight and inclusivity.

Pupils St Clements School:

- Option to create a small group or class base engagement to gain pupil voice to participate in the later stages of the project - e.g Artwork and design features such as playground features.
- To be discussed with the school to identify any curriculum based or future skill development opportunities for pupils
- The potential for pupil voice in ASN contexts should be explored early in the process, ensuring sensitively and inclusively.

ASN (Additional Support Needs) Supporting Partners:

- Staff representation should span all areas of need and support provision, ensuring a comprehensive picture of current facilities and aspirations for improvement.
- Where applicable, Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) representatives should be consulted, especially if they play an active role in current school provision
- Occupational therapists / physiotherapists should also feature in consultations at strategic points to help inform briefing and then later to review spaces such as hygiene rooms to ensure current thoughts / practices are being implemented. All of which ensures a building that is responsive to all needs.

Parents / Wider Community:

- The Parent Council or a separate steering group of parents should be engaged to represent family perspectives.
- Broader opportunities for parental engagement should also be provided - such as virtual sessions - to ensure all families have the chance to contribute to the process.
- Consider whether there is a need to engage with local community groups or the wider community, especially if the development is expected to impact the neighbourhood or involve shared facilities.

Anticipated Outcomes:

Stages 0/1 - Brief Development

- Gather early insights into what currently works well, what challenges exist, and what improvements the school community would like to see in a future setting.
- Use "day in the life" exercises with pupils and staff to build a deeper understanding of routines, spaces, and support needs.
- Undertake general team visits to example projects and engage informally with the school environment to gain lessons learned.
- Identify key design drivers, levels of interest, and priorities for spatial relationships and adjacencies within the school.
- Finalise the initial project brief based on emerging themes from engagement activity.

Stages 2/3 – Design Exploration | Concept Development

- Develop and test a range of early design options that reflect the needs and aspirations gathered during earlier stages.
- Host interactive workshops with stakeholder groups to review and refine key spatial adjacencies and layout priorities.
- Work towards establishing budget costings aligned with preferred design directions.
- Support a shared decision-making process to agree a final design proposal that reflects the input of the school and community.

Stages 4/5 – Design Development | Construction and Establishing Identity

- Deliver "Design Your Space" sessions to explore opportunities for personalisation, ensuring the school environment feels meaningful and tailored to its users.
- Provide regular design updates / visits to key stakeholders and create space for discussion and feedback as the design evolves into detailed proposals.
- Establish familiarisation strategy for pupil transition to new building - to be considered alongside programme and handover planning.

Workshop 01 :

Day in the Life - St Clement's School

School Demographic

As part of the early engagement work, a “Day in the Life” visit took place at St Clement’s School on 26th March. The aim of the session was to gain a deeper understanding of daily routines, spatial use, and the lived experiences of pupils and staff - informing the emerging brief through observation and conversation.

St Clement’s is located close to the centre of Dingwall and is made up of three separate buildings arranged around a public courtyard-style layout. This shared courtyard also serves as a public access route and car park, and connects to both the community centre and the Gaelic early years provision. The school is housed in buildings that date back to the early 20th century, originally forming part of the Old Academy and later used as part of the town’s primary school provision.

Facilities include nine classrooms, a canteen/general purpose room, a soft play space, sensory room, resource room. The school is registered for an Early Years provision but currently do not offer 0-5 education within the school. The staff team comprises of 12 teachers, around 30 pupil support assistants, a principal teacher, and a head teacher, supported by visiting professionals such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, and health staff.

The “Day in the Life” session offered valuable insights into how the current layout and facilities support care, learning, and connection - and where there are opportunities to improve. These observations are already shaping early design thinking and helping to prioritise what matters most to the school community.

The school’s motto is : “*At St Clement’s we inspire Ambition and Nurture Happiness.*”

Pupil Demographic

The school’s catchment area extends across a broad geographical range, currently including Alness and Invergordon, south to Beaully and North Kessock, and westward beyond Dingwall. In addition to pupils from within this catchment, the school also supports a number of children who reside outwith these boundaries, reflecting its role as a specialist provision.

The school currently supports 51 pupils with a range of complex needs, including physical, sensory, communication needs, learning needs, alongside social, emotional and wellbeing support requirements. Within the school the classrooms typically have 6-8 pupils and the visit highlighted that more complex classes could have 5 adults (teacher + supportive staff) providing 1:3 support ratio.



Workshop 01 :

Day in the Life - St Clement's School

Arrivals & Departures

Pupils typically arrive and depart via mini-bus or taxi-style transport, which can lead to congestion at peak times. Currently, two designated drop-off and pick-up points serve the primary and senior phases, helping to ease transitions for pupils and support safer movement for staff. However, the public realm in front of the buildings also functions as both the school and community car park, which adds to the complexity and increases the need for careful traffic management.

To improve safety and efficiency, a clearer pick-up and drop-off strategy is recommended. One potential approach could include a dedicated drop-off loop for school transport vehicles, with separate two-way parking provision for staff and general use - reducing conflict between pedestrian and vehicle routes and supporting smoother operations during busy times.

Main Entrance

The formal main entrance to the school is located within the modern, single-storey annex building, which contains the administrative offices and three primary classrooms. Unlike many ASN school buildings, the arrival experience is notably open, allowing direct access into the main entrance without a controlled vestibule. While a secure line separates the learning areas, visitors and members of the public can freely access the Head Teacher’s office and admin spaces, which ideally should be located beyond the secure threshold.

Senior management have highlighted that this arrangement has caused challenges in the past, including instances of unauthorised access attempts and general safety concerns - particularly during out-of-hours periods when only SMT or admin staff are present in the building. Addressing the arrival sequence and security zoning would improve safeguarding and provide a more appropriate balance between openness and safety

Classrooms & Ancillary Spaces

The classrooms at St. Clement’s are distributed across three separate buildings arranged around a central courtyard. Most recently, the senior phase has been relocated into the third building - an early Victorian structure that previously served as office space. Of the three, the modular annex currently aligns most closely with contemporary thinking around Additional Support Needs (ASN) learning environments, offering more appropriate room adjacencies and spatial flow.

The older buildings, while adapted over time to meet learners’ needs, offer a mixed experience. Features such as high vaulted ceilings and large windows provide generous natural light and a feeling of openness. However, these benefits are offset by limited control over the internal environment and a series of narrow, enclosed spaces that feel disconnected and restrictive. Several key areas lack natural light, and movement through the buildings is often unclear, with awkward links and short cuts between rooms. Wayfinding across the campus is challenging and inconsistent, highlighting the need for improved navigation to support independence, accessibility, and a more inclusive, learner-friendly environment.



Workshop 01 :

Day in the Life - St Clement's School

Mobility Equipment + Storage

The modular annex building highlights the scale and importance of mobility equipment within the school, with a visibly high volume of kit stored throughout the space. This reinforces the need to consider transitions between different types of equipment as part of daily routines, as many pupils arrive using one form of mobility aid and transfer to another throughout the day.

At present, the absence of dedicated mobility storage places pressure on shared spaces, creating competition for room between mobility aids, teaching resources, and other essential items. Purpose-built mobility storage - designed for secure placement, charging where required, and easy access - are options to improve the strategy going forward. Rather than locked away areas, experience tells us that alcove arrangements work best to improve functionality, especially when the equipment is essential to daily activities. This provision would enhance day-to-day operations, ensure safety, and better support pupils' independence and dignity while reducing disruption across learning environments.

Storage

Storage is currently distributed across various areas within classrooms, but feedback expressed a preference for keeping teaching spaces streamlined, calm, and free from visual clutter. A well-organised environment was seen as a positive in supporting focus, reducing distractions, and creating a more flexible and adaptable learning space.

One key strategy to achieve this is the use of integrated teaching walls, which consolidate essential classroom components - such as interactive screens, whiteboards, storage, and display areas - into a single, centralised elevation. This not only enhances the functionality of the space but also frees up other walls and areas within the room, allowing for greater layout flexibility. To support this further, small, dedicated classroom stores positioned nearby can house additional resources, materials, and equipment that do not need to be on immediate display. This dual approach allows teaching spaces to remain tidy and efficient while providing opportunities to incorporate more focused display zones or learning stations tailored to specific activities or pupil needs.

Learning Environment - Modular Annex

The modular annex demonstrates several key strengths in supporting learners with complex and non-ambulant needs. Classrooms benefit from strong visual and physical connections to the outdoors, with direct access to external play spaces - something staff consistently cited as a positive feature for supporting engagement, regulation, and transitions. Additionally, each classroom is paired with a smaller breakout or quiet room, providing space for individualised support or low-stimulation environments as needed.

However, some challenges in the annex layout remain. The current door thresholds and handing mean wheelchair users often need to exit classrooms backwards to access the outdoor space, which can be awkward and limit opportunities for shared experiences with peers.



Workshop 01 :

Day in the Life - St Clement's School

Staff also raised concerns about the storage of oxygen within a general classroom, which is not best practice. A dedicated oxygen store - ideally fire-rated and positioned on an external wall - would be safer and more appropriate, while still needing to be readily accessible in response to pupil needs. Classroom spaces, typically accommodating six pupils, were felt to be flexible and well-sized. However, circulation within shared areas of the annex can feel tight, particularly given the volume of mobility equipment in use. Wider corridors and consistently wider, automated doors were recommended to support safe, comfortable movement and ease of transition throughout the day. A desire for designated cloakroom areas was also noted - both for supporting pupil independence and reducing clutter in teaching spaces.

Compared to the older buildings on site, which pose greater challenges for accessibility and modern learning needs, the annex sets a more positive benchmark. Therefore, it is important to look at the positives raised and translate these into a new design to significantly enhance the usability and inclusivity of this key learning environment.

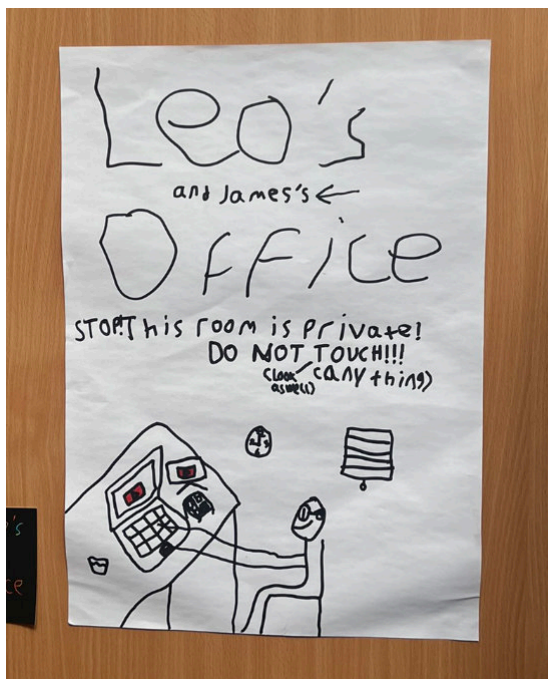
Learning Environment - Historic Buildings

The classrooms within the older buildings benefit from generous floor areas that have allowed staff to creatively adapt the spaces to suit a wide range of learning needs. Teachers have curated zones within classrooms to offer varied experiences, including soft gathering areas, focused learning stations, standard teaching zones, and more enclosed retreat-style dens. These approaches help to break down what are otherwise large, open rooms into more manageable, purposeful environments that support engagement, regulation, and flexibility in how pupils access learning.

However, despite the potential these larger spaces offer, the current layouts feel fragmented and disjointed. Much of the existing furniture is outdated and not well aligned with the intended functions of the spaces, lacks flexibility and, in some cases, introduces visual or sensory harshness through colour and material choices. A more cohesive, streamlined spatial strategy - supported by well-designed, flexible furniture - would allow for clearer zoning within each classroom. Staff also highlighted that the addition of a dedicated quiet room for each classroom would significantly enhance the provision, giving pupils a consistent, nearby space for regulation or focused support.

In previous years, open areas within the circulation routes of the older buildings were used as informal breakout zones. However, these spaces -such as the one shown in the bottom left image- now serve more as back-of-house corridors, lacking the character or quality to support meaningful learning activity. Nevertheless, this historic use suggests a valuable design principle for the future: incorporating shared breakout or flexible group spaces adjacent to classrooms could reintroduce this level of informal, adaptable learning while supporting inclusive and pupil-led experiences.

Some of the classrooms in the older buildings benefit from direct access to the outdoors, which staff noted as a strong positive. However, wayfinding within the older buildings is a significant challenge. Narrow, enclosed corridors with unexpected changes in level can be disorienting and unsettling. Future design strategies should minimise these kinds of abrupt transitions and prioritise clear sightlines, natural light, and intuitive navigation throughout the school. Maximising visual connections to external spaces will enhance orientation and also contribute to a calmer, more inclusive learning environment overall.



Workshop 01 :

Day in the Life - St Clement's School

Practical Subjects

There is a strong and consistent desire among staff for improved access to practical subject areas within the school. While some pupils currently attend science lessons at Dingwall Academy, this is not a viable option for all. Staff emphasised the importance of creating equitable learning experiences by providing a broader curriculum offer on-site. Dedicated spaces for STEM, drama, music, and art were frequently mentioned, alongside a life skills area where pupils could practise real-world activities such as cooking and independent living. During the visit, senior pupils were preparing stir-fry meals in classrooms using portable hobs, without access to running water within the classroom, highlighting the limitations of the current setup and the need for more appropriate facilities.

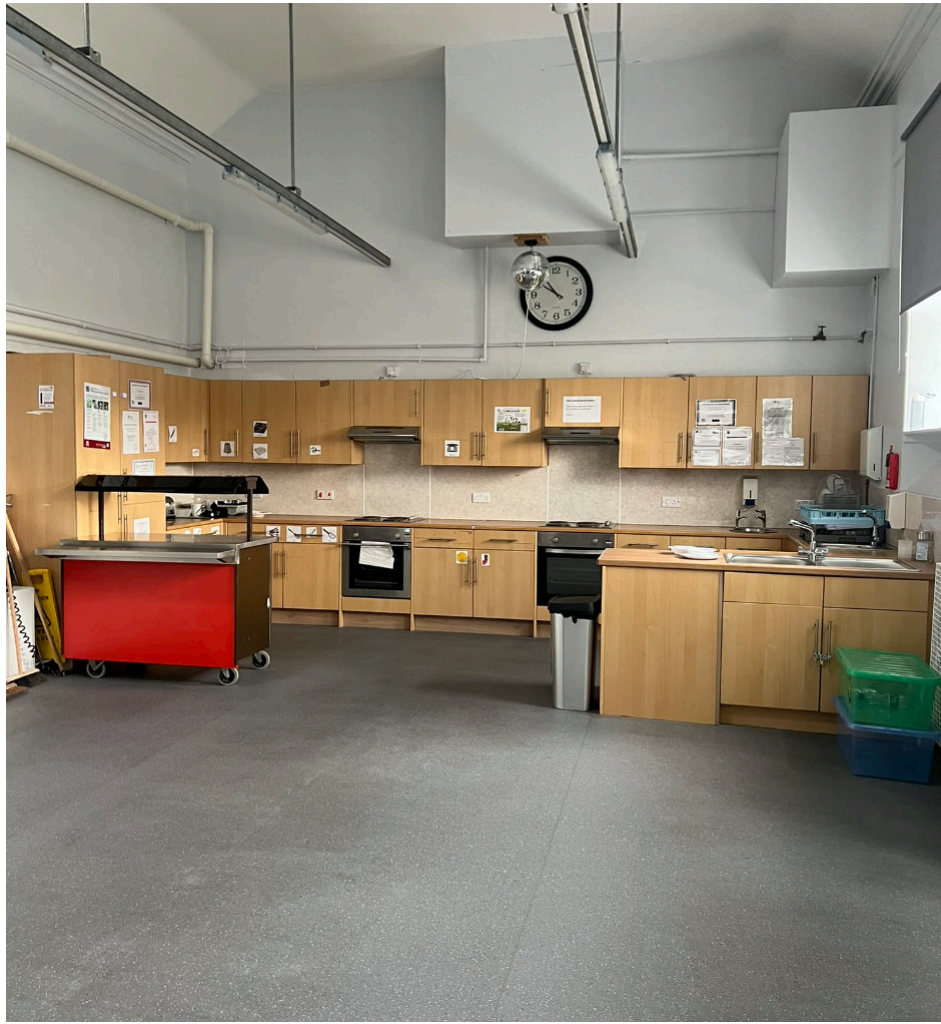
Equally, staff highlighted the need for purpose-designed dining and PE spaces. Although the current hall is used regularly, it is not fit for purpose - its limited size and poor acoustics restricts its use and prevents the whole school community from coming together for events, performances, or assemblies. Staff noted that separating these functions into dedicated spaces would significantly enhance their value and use. For instance, a permanent dining area could also support cross classroom teaching, small group work, or social activities, while a dedicated PE space would better meet curriculum needs, support movement and sensory regulation, and offer a much-needed change of environment.

Toilets & Personal Care

Early consideration of toileting and personal care strategies is essential in any ASN project, and this is particularly evident at St. Clement's. Staff currently rely on pupil WCs within the older buildings, while access to the annex's hygiene rooms is limited due to both layout and functionality. This restricts the efficient use of what should be a key support space in the school. Though hygiene rooms do include showers, the current design - with fixed barriers more suited to self-transferring users - does not reflect the broader needs of pupils requiring assisted support. A wet-room style configuration would be more appropriate for maintaining dignity and facilitating care.

While the hygiene rooms are generously sized, their daily use requires better planning for integrated storage, easy access to essential equipment, and improved environmental controls - temperatures during the visit were noted as uncomfortably high. In addition, the current locking system poses a challenge: rooms are kept locked to prevent unauthorised access, but staff must use coins to unlock them externally, which proves impractical when supporting a pupil in real time. A more refined strategy that balances security with responsive, discreet care is strongly recommended to protect the dignity and comfort of young people during personal care routines.

Generally, the quality and age of toilet facilities across the campus vary considerably, with several spaces no longer meeting the expectations of either staff or pupils. Learners themselves noted a desire for more modern, well-maintained, and welcoming facilities.



Workshop 01 :

Day in the Life - St Clement's School

Sensory / Therapy Spaces

Sensory and therapy spaces are central to the daily experience of pupils at St. Clement's. Every available space within the school has been adapted to meet these needs, whether through the introduction of soft furnishings to create nurturing, calming environments, or the creative use of small, otherwise unused areas for quiet reflection and regulation. This resourcefulness highlights the critical role that sensory support plays in pupils' well-being and ability to engage with learning. Looking ahead, the connection between self-regulation and sensory exploration must be carefully considered and meaningfully embedded into the design of any new school environment - ensuring spaces are not only functional but tailored to meet a wide spectrum of emotional and sensory needs.

Soft Play

Soft play was highlighted as equally important for senior phase pupils as it is for younger learners, with features such as swings and ball pits continuing to play a valuable role in sensory exploration and self-regulation. It's essential to recognise that age and stage appropriateness applies to these environments too. In the current setting, the senior soft play space is generously sized and offers a good variety of experiences, which is seen as a strong asset.

Looking ahead, the new school should include two dedicated soft play spaces, one for junior pupils and one for senior pupils, to ensure environments are appropriately tailored to different developmental and sensory needs. Further staff and therapist engagement will refine key elements, ensuring flexible, well-equipped spaces that adapt to changing needs, maintaining safe, meaningful, and inclusive environments for all learners.

Sensory

Dedicated sensory spaces exist in both the modular annex and older buildings, but the older building's sensory room doubles as a library, limiting its effectiveness. Sensory rooms need calm, low-stimulation, and blackout features, while libraries require light and activity. Combining these functions reduces the usefulness of both.

Moving forward, we recommend separating these functions entirely. In place of two standard sensory rooms, the proposal is to provide one traditional sensory room, focused on regulation, calm, and withdrawal and one immersive space. Immersion rooms offer a rich, flexible environment where light, sound, visuals, and temperature can be controlled to create tailored multi-sensory experiences. These spaces support engagement, communication, and emotional regulation. They also support therapeutic interventions and curriculum enrichment in ways that static sensory rooms cannot.

Safe / Nurture Space

Padded safe spaces are a topic of considerable debate within ASN education. Currently present within the school, these spaces should be considered in the new building to ensure continuity of support. However, it is recommended that greater emphasis be placed on creating diverse regulation options throughout the environment. By prioritising proactive sensory and emotional regulation strategies, the reliance on padded safe spaces may be reduced but this should be informed by the school.



Workshop 01 :

Day in the Life - St Clement's School

Staff Areas

Staff well-being should be a key priority in the new school design. Currently, available staff spaces are cramped and feel like secondary, less important areas, with some staff opting to eat in their cars due to the lack of inviting, comfortable environments. The satellite staff areas, a result of the separate buildings, unintentionally create divisions and a sense of isolation among staff. The new staff room should focus on promoting well-being by being welcoming and encouraging everyone to use the space. Incorporating elements of nature and providing privacy will help create a true retreat for staff to recharge.

External Environment

Access to outdoor space and opportunities for external play are considered vital elements of the school day at St. Clement's. Classrooms with direct access to the outdoors are strongly favoured, supporting both self-regulation and meaningful transitions between indoor and outdoor learning. Staff expressed a clear interest in expanding outdoor learning opportunities, including the development of rural and life skills. Covered outdoor areas were seen as a valuable feature, enabling year-round use regardless of weather conditions.

Privacy was emphasised as a key consideration in the design of external spaces. Ensuring that pupils' dignity is protected while outdoors is particularly important, especially during more personal or sensory regulation activities. Staff also highlighted the importance of having clearly structured outdoor zones. Dedicated spaces for growing and gardening should be kept separate from general play areas, allowing for quieter, purposeful activity. A Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) was seen as highly beneficial, both for physical education and for giving pupils a safe space to run off energy. In addition, a separate area for bikes and trikes would help ensure pupil safety, offering a structured environment for physical development and developing practical skills such as crossing roads without impacting other outdoor activities.

General Observations

To support the evolving needs of the school and its learners, several practical considerations emerged from discussions with staff. These reflect both current limitations and aspirations for a future, more functional learning environment:

- Food prep:** A dedicated area is needed for food blending, as this currently takes place in a shared quiet space, limiting both functions.
- Capacity and Early Years:** The Head Teacher 's aspiration is to increase capacity to 70 pupils and introduce Early Years provision, aligning with the school's 3–18 registration.
- Community access:** Proximity and safe routes to Dingwall are important for life skills development (e.g. shopping trips) and should be considered in site planning/analysis.
- Building layout:** The current split across three buildings limits pupil independence. A single, unified building would better support autonomy.
- Laundry facilities:** These are well used; future provision should include one larger or two smaller spaces to serve junior and senior phases effectively.
- Functionality:** Future spaces should be purpose-designed yet with adaptability and flexibility in mind to meet practical daily needs and reduce overlap or conflict between uses.



Workshop 02 :

Activity 1 Stars & Wishes - Session 1: Parents & Carers

Workshop Aim:

The purpose of identifying the ‘stars’ within the existing environment / area seeks to start the entire process with a firmly positive mindset and attitude working collectively towards a collective goal. While the ‘wishes’ seek to capture the aspirations and the features the stakeholders would like to have within the new building.

The event introduced the briefing process and council team to the stakeholders and served as a session to remember that whilst it’s often easy to focus on the negative or ‘what doesn’t work’ there are always positives to be found and highlighted, which can often be forgotten amongst a negative mindset.

This first session, therefore, wasn’t simply a list of likes/dislikes but sought to encourage reflection, thought and discussion to prepare stakeholders for the upcoming briefing and design process.

In order to engage stakeholders two interactive activities were planned, the first ‘Stars and Wishes’ capturing all the dreams and big ideas. While the second activity provided precedent images to encourage dialogue and real-world examples to illustrate the potential within a new building.

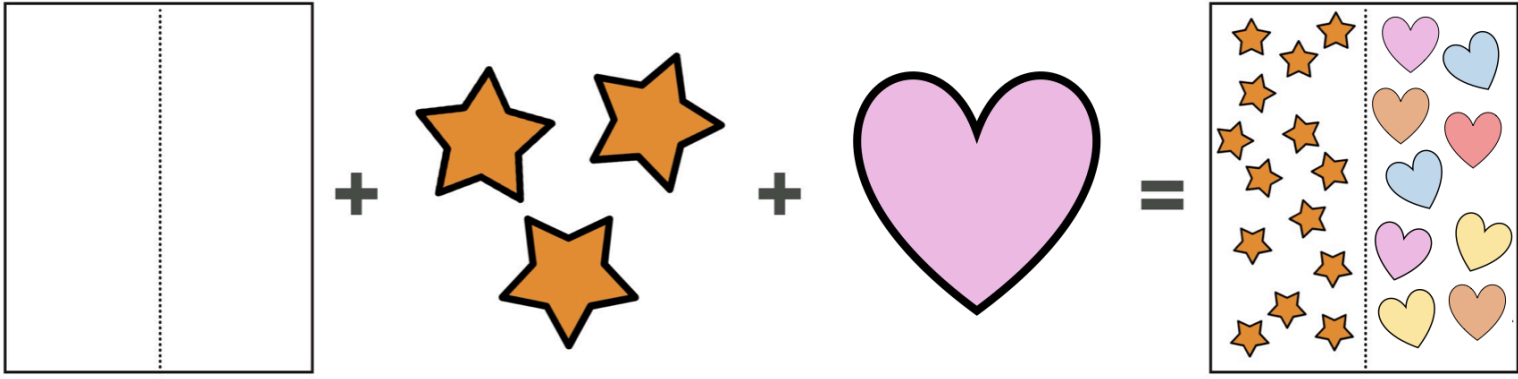
Location: Dingwall Community Centre
Session 1: Parents / Carers
Attendance: 15
Date: 30th April

Activity 1 Outcomes:

While the session was well attended, the hope is that the success of this first session will encourage more participation as the design process develops. An opportunity for a virtual session has been discussed to allow more staff/parents/carers to access the engagement series.

Key **STARS** highlighted by the parents/carers included:

- Pupils
- Families
- Staff
- Community
- Partnerships
- Soft-play
- Sensory
- Visibility
- Links to other schools & groups
- Central to the community
- Learner interaction
- Children have a sense of belonging in Dingwall
- Links to local businesses
- Location



Key **WISHES** highlighted by the parents/carers included:

- Stand alone
- Garden area – growing spaces
- Hydrotherapy pool
- Docharty Brae
- Outdoor learning
- Assembly hall
- Gym hall
- Infrastructure
- Breakout rooms for all
- Lifeskills
- Soft play
- Rebound
- A view
- Practical subjects
- Primary sensory
- Secondary sensory
- Sensory garden
- Sick bay
- Expansion
- Social area
- Library
- Meeting rooms
- Nursery
- Wide corridors
- Easy community access
- Nature spaces
- Football pitch
- Outdoor stage
- Workshop - rural skills development
- Accessible paths to town
- Business spaces e.g. pupil café
- Adjustable tabletops
- Poly tunnels
- Animal spaces – hens/ducks
- Hoists
- Community garden
- Shinty pitch
- Maintain independence
- Art room
- Hot tub
- Automatic doors
- Bike shed
- Bouldering wall
- Sound-field system
- Dance studio
- Blackout windows
- Hair and beauty rooms
- Bigger more open reception
- Track and field area
- Hammocks
- Swings
- Defibrillators
- Car parking
- Play outdoor structures
- Adequate parking for staff & visitors
- Low / calming lighting for sensory areas
- Spaces for visitors
- Post 18 opportunities on site / nearby

Workshop 02 :

Activity 1 Stars & Wishes - Session 2: Staff

Session 2

Location: St Clement's School
Session 2: Staff
Attendance: 14
Date: 30th April

Activity 1 Outcomes:

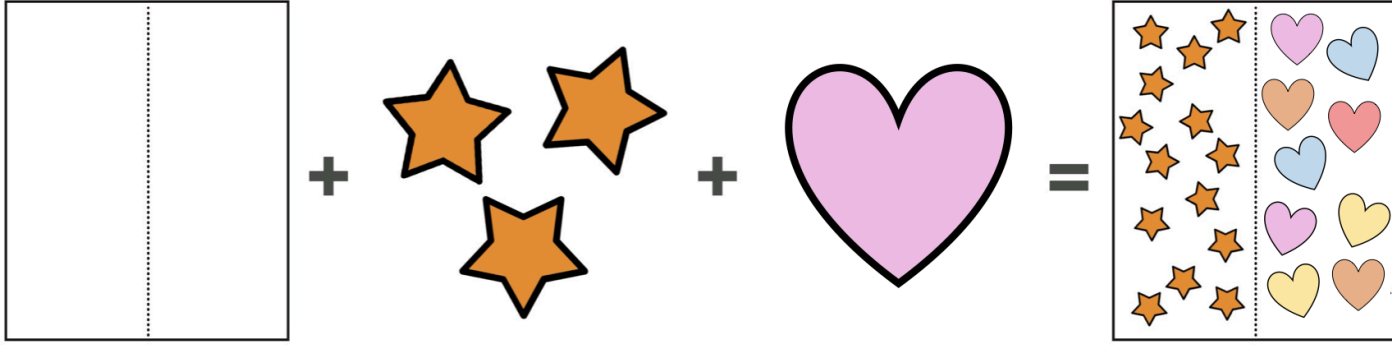
This meeting focused on staff and served as an opportunity to introduce the engagement series and begin early discussions around the project brief. Again the hope is that a positive experience at this session will build momentum and encourage wider involvement as the briefing process moves forward.

Key **STARS** highlighted by the staff included:

- Pupils
- Colleagues
- Families
- Easy community access
- Happy Environment
- Positive ethos
- Access to playground
- Primary area – small room off classroom
- Primary - Toilets in corridors
- Helpful community
- Safe outdoor space

Key **WISHES** highlighted staff included:

- STEM Space
- Soundproofing
- Music room
- Common rooms
- Staff toilets
- Messy play
- Stage /Drama
- Boundaries that ensure privacy
- Differentiated play equipment
- Swimming pool
- Resource cupboard
- Fob access
- Practice roads
- Cycle track
- Secluded spaces within classrooms
- Games room
- Sledging slope
- Climbing wall
- Computer lab
- Meeting space



Staff **WISHES** cont.

- Bike tracks
- Personal care space
- Classroom lockers
- Space for parents and staff to chat
- Separate games hall
- Dining hall
- Breakout spaces with windows
- Learning zones/stations
- MUGA
- Nursery
- Hoists
- High level windows
- Small outdoor safe spaces
- Toilets adjoined to classrooms
- School bus
- Automatic doors
- Heating and cooling controls
- Sports field
- Single storey building
- First aid room
- Food prep area
- Home Economics classroom
- Pupil support areas
- Therapy spaces in addition standard areas
- External and internal rebound
- Climbing wall
- Quiet space in each room
- Staff room – well-being space
- Staff resource & prep area
- Lifelong learning opportunities
- Storage

The “Stars and Wishes” shared by staff and parents/carers at St Clement’s highlight a school community rooted in strong relationships, a positive ethos, and deep ties to the local area. Pupils, families, staff, and the supportive atmosphere were consistently identified as current strengths, alongside the school’s visibility, its central location in Dingwall, and access to outdoor and community spaces. These valued features reflect a community that sees inclusion, connection, and belonging as central to the school experience.

Looking ahead, there is a clear and ambitious vision for the future. Aspirations focus on the creation of a flexible, accessible, and therapeutic environment tailored to the diverse needs of learners. Key themes include the desire for specialist facilities such as hydrotherapy and sensory rooms, inclusive outdoor learning areas, and spaces that promote life skills, independence, and community engagement - such as gardens, enterprise hubs, and breakout areas. Parents and staff also highlighted the importance of well-designed support spaces, both for pupils and for staff wellbeing and collaboration. These wishes reveal a strong commitment to creating a school that not only meets complex needs but does so in a way that is nurturing, aspirational, and deeply connected to the wider community.

St Clement's Stars & Wishes



When considering more innovative elements, participants responded positively to small group areas and informal gathering points such as nooks and soft seating zones. Features like slides and climbing structures were also well received, seen not just as play elements but as tools for promoting active movement and self-regulation. These spaces were recognised for their potential to support emotional wellbeing and sensory needs, while also enriching the overall learning experience.

In summary, there was a clear message from all groups: the design of the building and landscape should be approached holistically. Indoor and outdoor environments should work together seamlessly, with flexible, nurturing, and inclusive spaces that support a broad range of learning, play, and social experiences.



Workshop 02 :

Activity 2 Design Inspirations - Session 2: Staff

Location: St Clement's School
Session 2: Staff
Attendance: 14
Date: 30th April

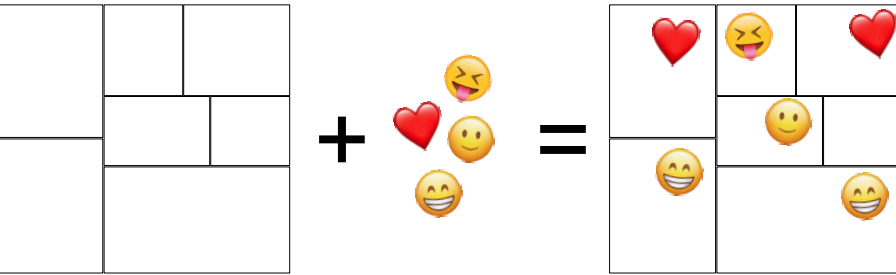
Activity 2 Outcome Summary:

Design Inspirations – Teaching Spaces

The tiered seating was popular with some of the groups and the different opportunities for social gathering. The built in seating was popular and noted for 1:1 learning opportunities or a moment of pause when used as a self-regulation tool. The stairs were not popular with the preference for the new building to be on a single level. Again the large open spaces were not as popular with the groups with the view this may overwhelm pupils. Views and connections to nature were popular with each group alongside the provision of practical subjects for pupils. The classroom image with built in furniture was popular with groups from clear storage space and ease of access to the classroom areas.

Design Inspirations – Innovative Spaces

From a staff perspective, the inclusion of small areas such as the informal gathering spaces was seen as a valuable design feature with wide-reaching benefits. These quieter, more enclosed spaces were identified as particularly supportive for pupil wellbeing, offering opportunities for emotional regulation and social-emotional control throughout the day. Staff felt that such areas would not only help pupils who may become overwhelmed in larger or busier environments, but could also serve as informal and flexible working spaces for staff themselves - encouraging collaboration, reflection, and more personalised engagement with pupils. However, feedback also stressed the importance of ensuring that these spaces remain inclusive. While nooks and retreat spaces are beneficial for many, it will be essential to balance them with accessible, open-plan options to ensure that all pupils, regardless of mobility or support needs, can benefit from a diverse and equitable learning environment.



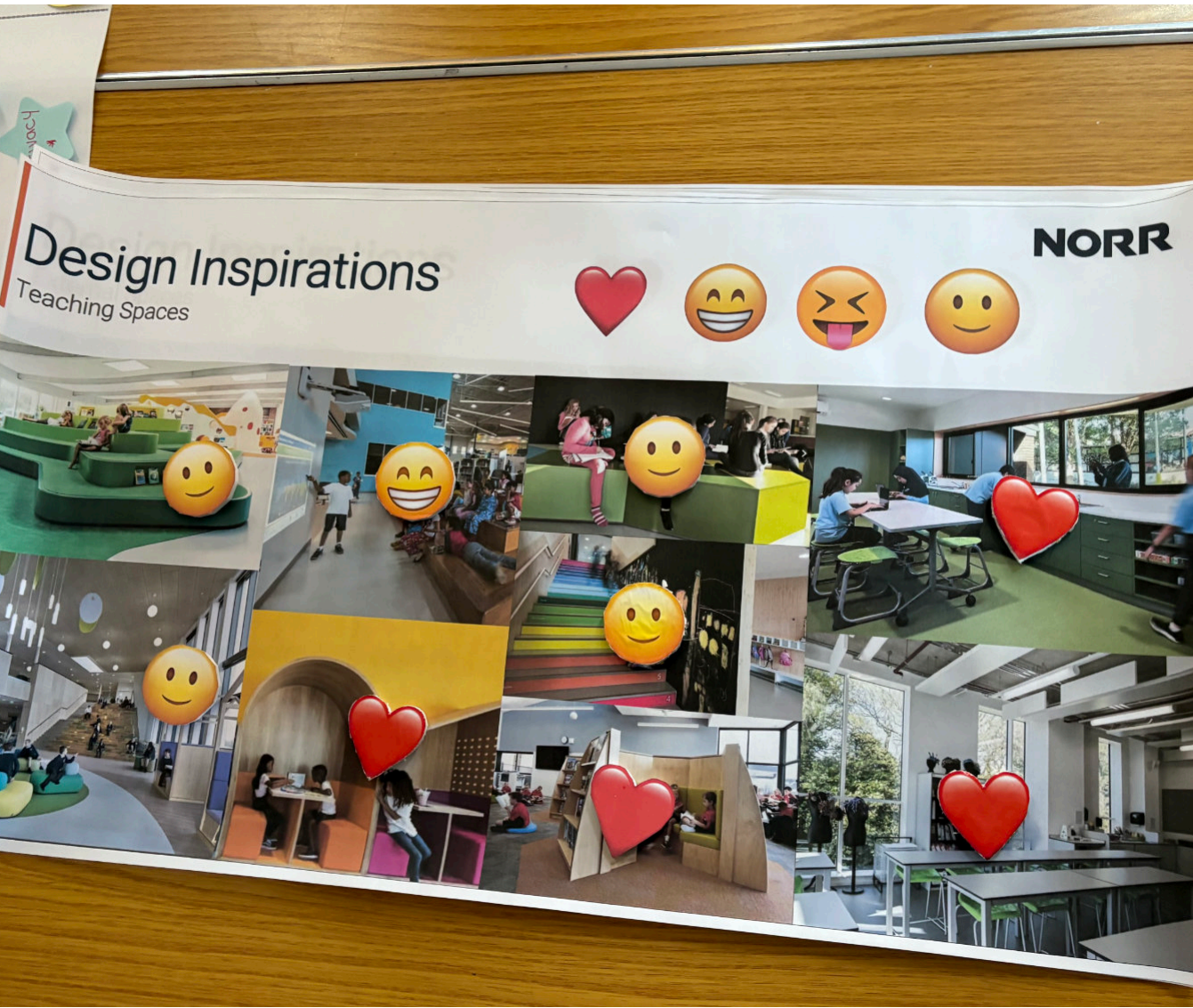
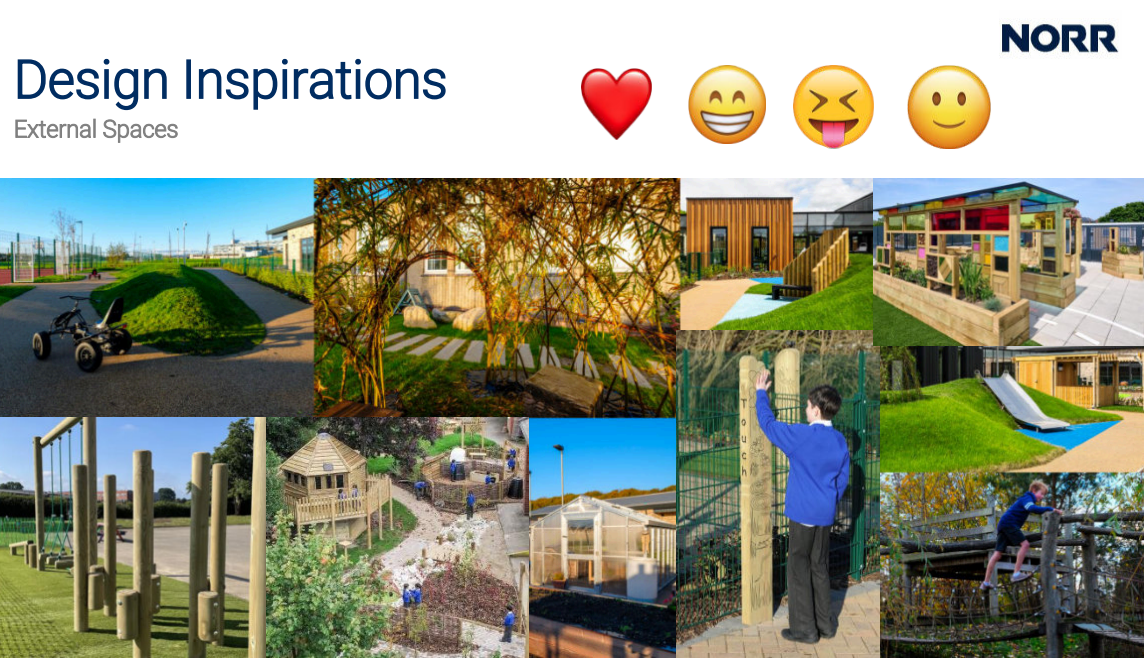
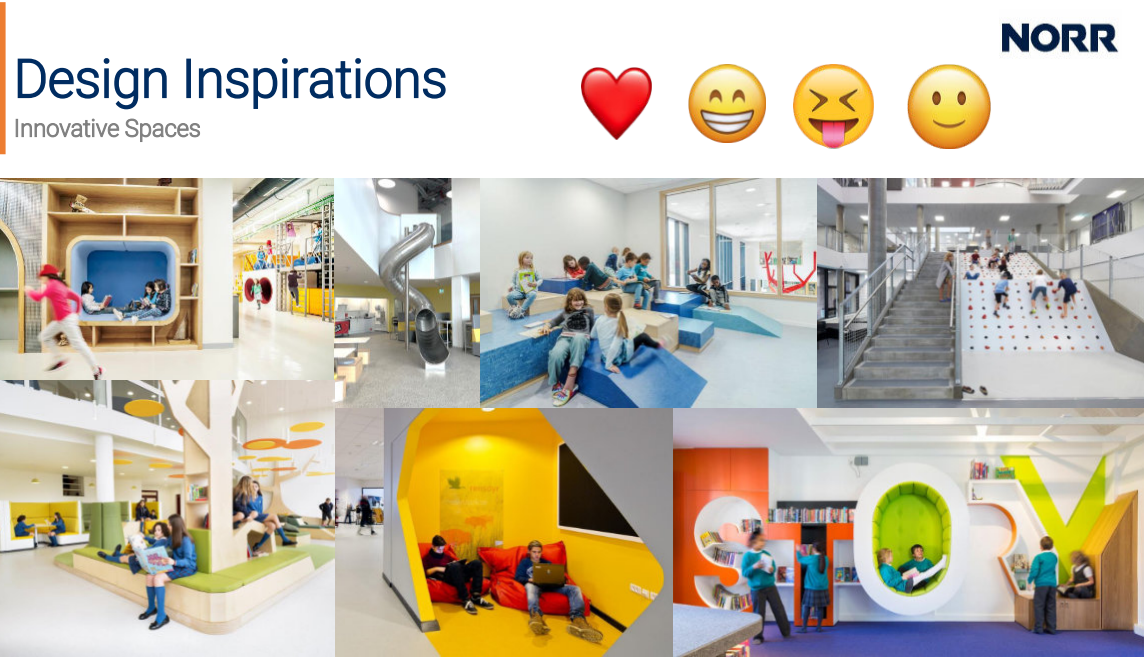
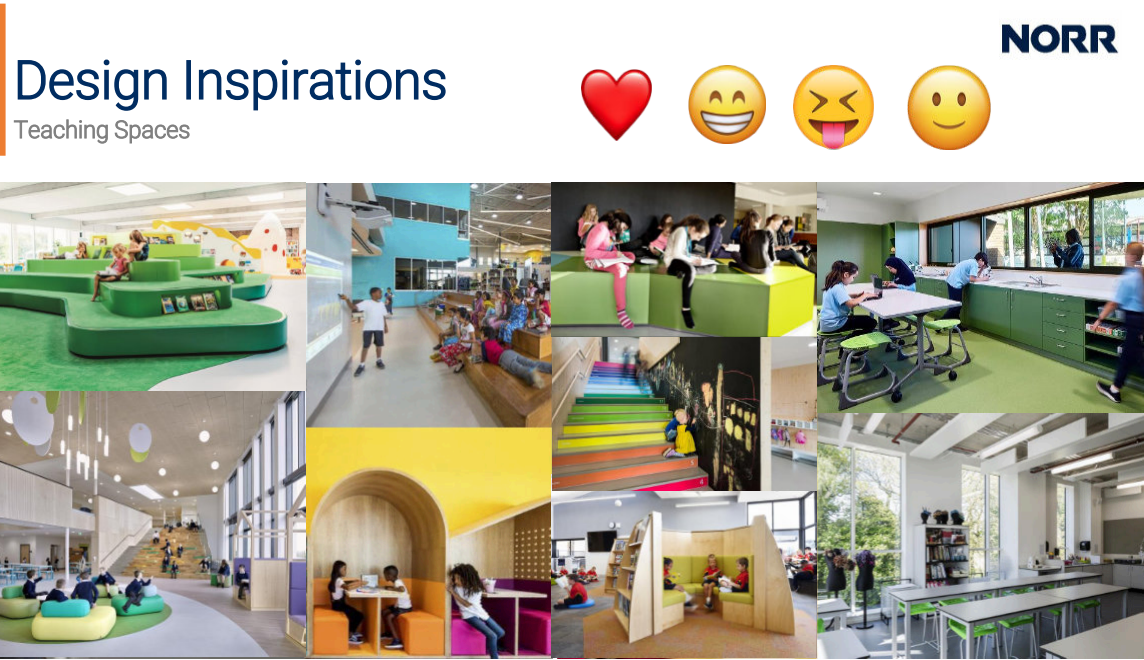
Design Inspirations – External Spaces

The value of high-quality external space emerged as a consistent priority across all engagement sessions, though there were some varied perspectives on specific features shown during the design inspiration activities. For example, trim trails were seen positively by some groups, particularly in terms of promoting fine motor skill development. However, other groups felt they offered less value when compared to more active play features such as swings and slides. These differences likely reflect the diverse needs and abilities within the school's pupil cohort, reinforcing the importance of designing for a wide range of preferences and physical capabilities.

Sensory totems were among the least favoured features, with many staff commenting that similar elements already present in the existing playground were underused and did not significantly contribute to the learning or play environment.

Conversely, the cycle track was consistently well received across all groups. It was recognised for its multi-functional benefits - supporting physical fitness, promoting independence, and offering a valuable tool for teaching road safety skills in a controlled environment.

Natural elements such as tree-houses and other nature-based play structures also attracted positive feedback. However, some concerns were raised around features like willow dens, which were considered a potential maintenance issue. Instead, stakeholders expressed enthusiasm for creating forest school-style areas using more robust, low-maintenance materials such as stone, timber, and mature planting. These were seen as rich opportunities for storytelling, sensory exploration, and imaginative play, further reinforcing the value of blending learning and play within a natural, outdoor setting.



Workshop 03 :

Activity 1 Pupil Tour - Dingwall Primary Senior Pupils

Activity 1 - School Tour

A group of the Dingwall Primary P7 pupils gave a tour of their current space, and offered their thoughts on what could be changed or enhanced when thinking about a new building. While they highlighted aspects of the current building that work well and ideas we could take forward into a new proposals, they struggled to find areas that needed improvement - demonstrating the strong ownership and pride they feel towards their school.

Prior to the tour there was a discussion with the senior management team on the Early years provision for the area. They noted that the Gaelic Early Years (EY) setting, located in the courtyard buildings at St Clement's, currently supports 24 children in a full-immersion environment. Due to the need for complete language immersion, these pupils currently need their own dedicated outdoor spaces unable to share an external environment with the English-speaking EY provision, which supports 60 children at Dingwall Primary. There is a clear preference for all EY spaces to be located near the primary setting to promote connection and continuity of learning experiences. Larger, shared playrooms - ideally two later-stage spaces rather than four smaller ones - were preferred, alongside the inclusion of social breakout areas for snack time and integrated cloakrooms within the playrooms to support independence for 3–5-year-olds.

Following this discussion, the senior pupils from both the English and Gaelic classes at Dingwall Primary contributed valuable insights into their school experience and aspirations for future learning environments. Their reflections highlighted a strong sense of school identity, with particular emphasis on pupil voice, community, and the importance of inclusive and nurturing spaces.

During the tour of the school, several key observations were noted. Breakout spaces positioned around classroom edges were praised for their usefulness, though some areas felt a little closed off or subterranean. The pupils proudly showcased how pupil voice is embedded throughout the school culture. Initiatives like the "Blether Station" and "A Wall to Talk" are standout features, allowing students to express opinions, stay informed, and ask questions. Display spaces are heavily used to showcase achievements, art, and shared messages from the pupil body.

The school library is a critical space within the school, with both fiction and non-fiction collections and age-appropriate reading areas. Pupils were passionate about the spaces and shared a desire to see more reading nooks around the school, while still retaining a central library. The popularity of reading was matched by the value placed on nurture and wellbeing spaces. "The Shieling," the school's dedicated nurture room, is deeply appreciated by all pupils. Similarly, the Hub provides vital support for ASN learners and there's clear efforts to promote whole-school understanding of mental health, wellbeing and understanding of ASN education/provision within the school.

There is a strong presence of language and communication support, including a BSL base that supports 1:1 learning and wider peer education in British Sign Language. This space would be required in a new building to provide the dedicated support while also promoting opportunity for learning the language. The Gaelic immersion classrooms are also valued, with both the pupils and the Head Teacher expressing interest in maintaining immersion until the senior phase, then supporting integration to ease transitions to secondary school - all of which is dependent on parental support.

Outside, pupils were keen for more varied spaces beyond football areas. They requested more benches, shelters, reading trees, trampolines, colouring tents, and tennis space. Bike and scooter use is high, and a need for improved storage was noted. Colourful, seagull-proof recycling bins were suggested as a way to encourage eco-friendly behaviour. Pupils also mentioned the importance of creative spaces like a stage for drama, music rooms, and STEM areas. Dining facilities were flagged as an area for improvement, with requests for more space and varied furniture to enhance comfort and choice.

The school's strong house culture was also noted - inter house events like talent shows promote mentorship and leadership across year groups. Informal details, like the staff room having great snacks and tea-making facilities, were noted by P7s, (whilst we've yet to receive confirmation from staff). The feelings the P7s have for their environment indicates the value of social, wellbeing and support the pupils feel for all school users.

EY pupils also benefit from relationships with senior pupils, who support them through early mentorship activities. The P7s noted the importance of having more space in early years and the need for a dining space to provide some calm and separation from the playroom. They highlighted Colin the fish, a much-loved EY pet, as part of the daily experience of the Eys environment.

Overall, the tour demonstrated a school community that values voice, connection, inclusivity, and wellbeing. The P7 pupils have clear pride in their environment and a strong aspiration to maintain the ethos at the school. Their recommendations indicate that spaces that are flexible, immersive, and supportive of both learning and emotional development - across all ages and stages.



Workshop 03 :

Activity 2 Stars & Wishes - Dingwall Primary Pupils

Location: Dingwall Primary School

Activity 2: Pupils

Attendance: 11 Pupils [mixture of P3 and P7 pupils]

Date: 30th April

Activity 2 Outcomes:

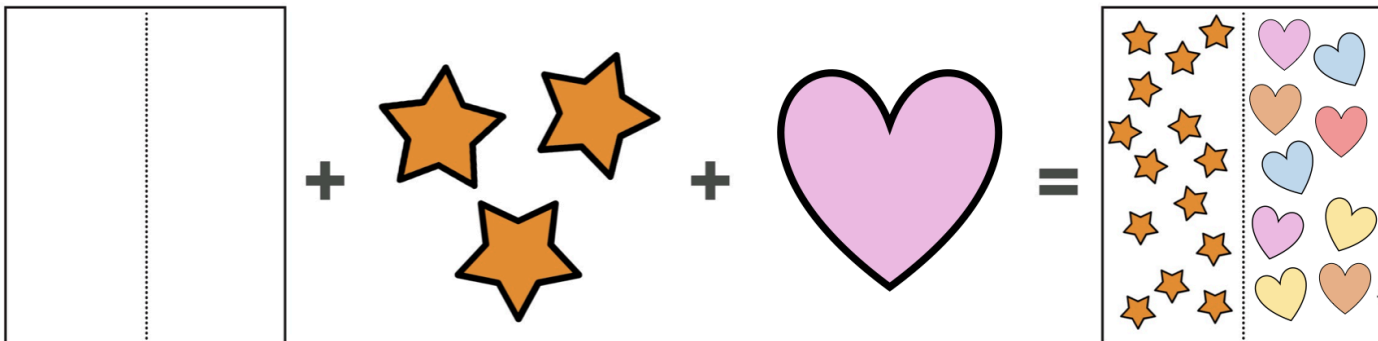
Various Stars and Wishes were noted by the group and notably there was a push for improving learning environments and maintaining the quality of the existing school ethos but looking forward into what opportunities a new building could create.

Key **STARS** highlighted by the pupils included:

- Library spaces
- Breakout areas from classrooms
- Staff
- Pupils
- BSL learning areas
- 'The Shieling' – nurture room very important for all pupils
- Sensory room
- Teachers
- Being able to make a cup of tea
- Like having an adult at break / lunch if I need them
- Outdoor exercise equipment
- Outdoor shelter
- Gaelic Education
- Pupil Voice

Key **WISHES** highlighted by the pupils included:

- Bigger Games Hall with better acoustics
- Tree house
- Swings in playground
- Trampolines outside
- More library spaces
- Running track
- Playground markings - hopscotch
- Stage for drama and performances
- Sand pit for little ones.
- Badminton area
- Sunroof
- Basketball court
- Slides
- Bigger bike / scooter sheds
- Plants or trees in classrooms



Pupil **WISHES** cont.

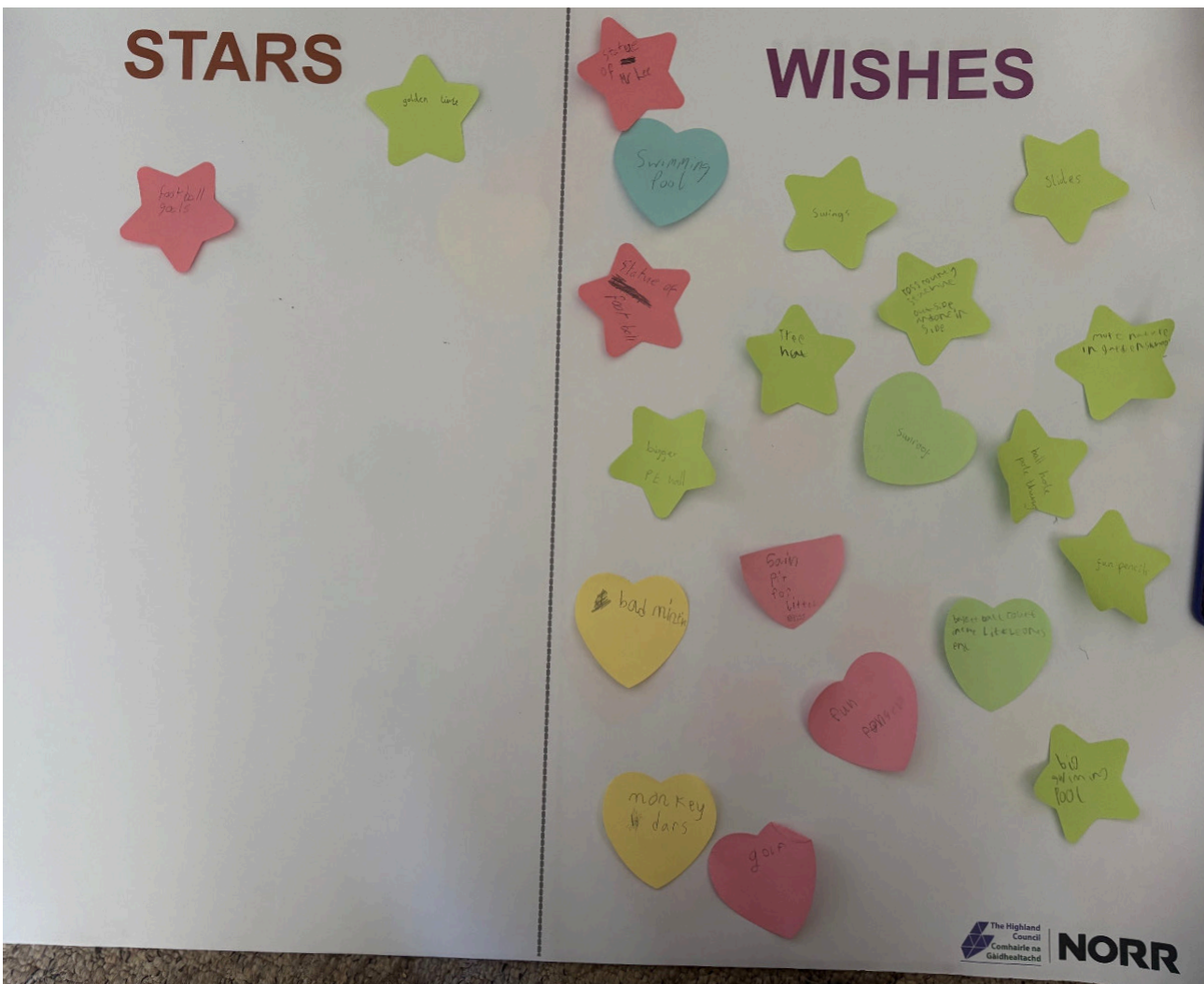
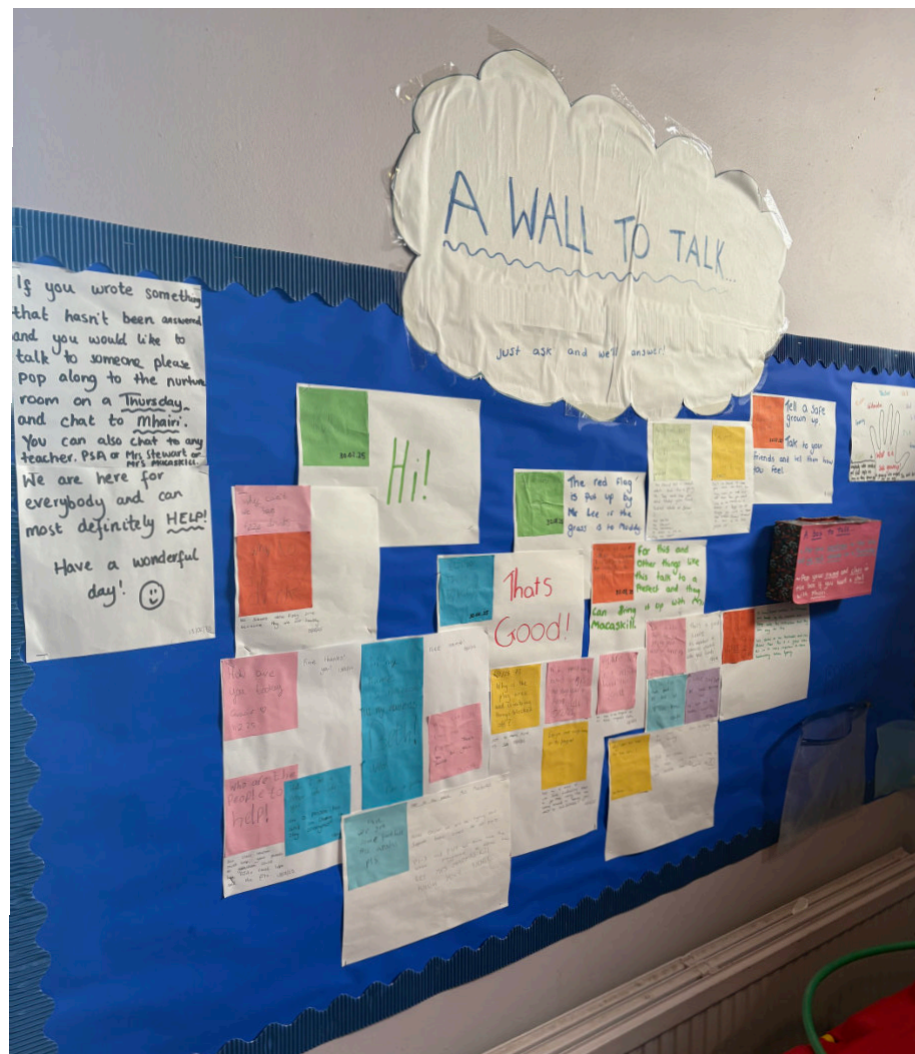
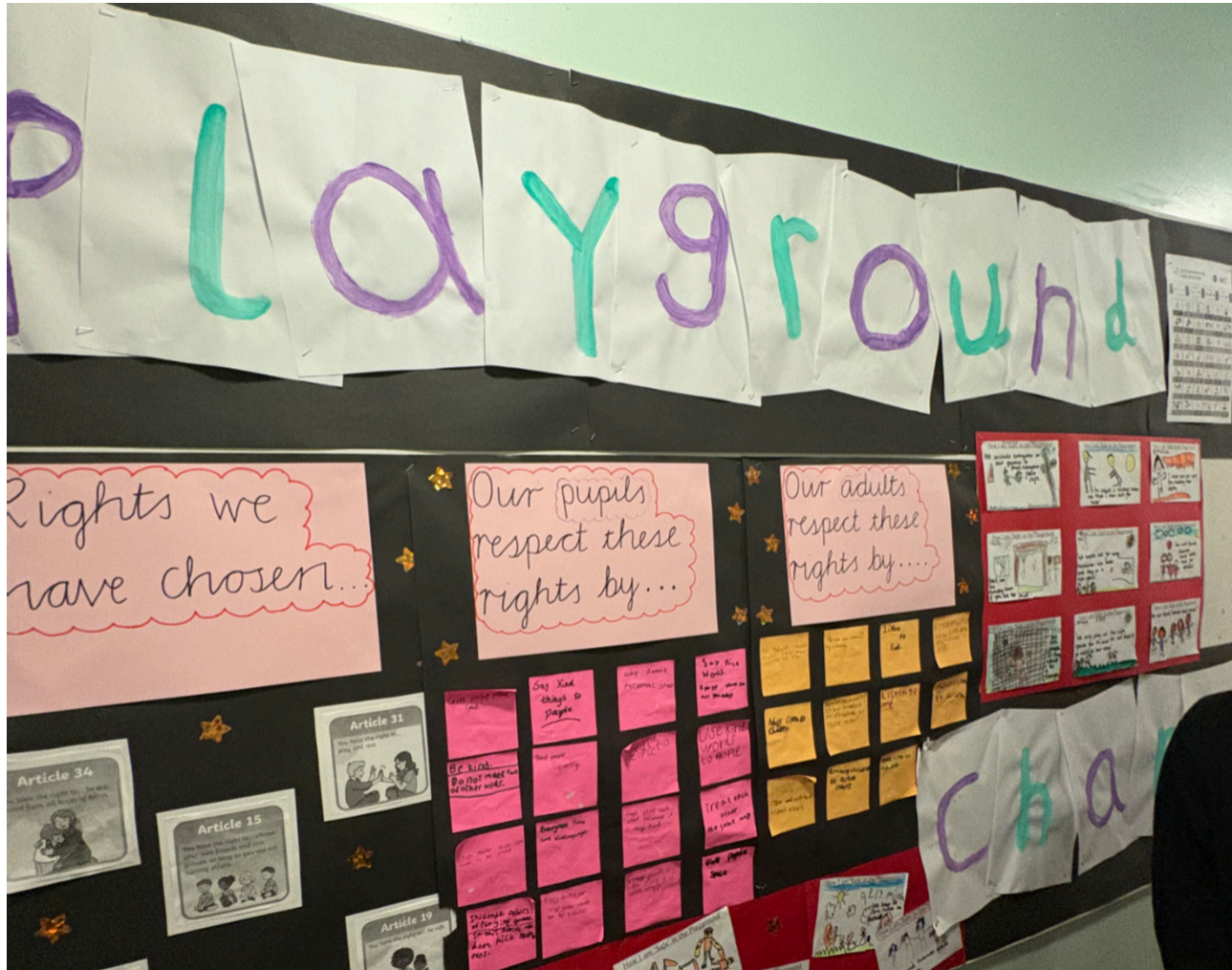
- Bike track
- Shelters for the big ones and the wee ones
- Sky light in dark places
- Hatcher space or greenhouse
- Growing space
- Breakout spaces
- Chalk drawing areas
- Music equipment
- Climbing area
- Better WiFi
- Beanbags & different teaching options
- Music areas
- STEM space
- Statue of Ross County
- Bike and scooter parking
- Reading tents
- Tennis courts
- MUGA
- Spaces for colouring

Dingwall Primary pupils identified a strong appreciation for spaces that support emotional wellbeing, independence, and pupil voice. Key "stars" included library areas, breakout spaces, supportive staff, sensory rooms, nurture spaces like "The Shieling," and the strength of pupil voice within the school. Their "wishes" centred around expanding play and learning opportunities: larger games halls, tree-houses, swings, trampolines, dedicated spaces for music and drama, growing areas, improved acoustics and lighting, and inclusive features like BSL learning areas and accessible breakout spaces. Pupils also expressed enthusiasm for areas that support quiet reflection and hands-on learning, such as beanbags, STEM rooms, and bringing in nature with classroom plants.

Stakeholders from both St Clement's and Dingwall Primary shared a strong and consistent set of priorities, revealing clear alignment in their aspirations for future learning environments. Across both communities, the importance of sensory spaces, nurture rooms, and breakout areas was emphasised - highlighting a collective desire for environments that support emotional wellbeing, personal space, and a sense of safety.

There was also strong enthusiasm for outdoor learning and active play, with features such as swings, slides, growing areas, and cycle tracks seen as valuable for both physical activity and regulation. Library and reading spaces were frequently mentioned as important calming zones that support learning and enjoyment. Additionally, creative and expressive spaces -such as performance stages, music areas, and art rooms- were seen as essential for supporting varied learning styles and fostering confidence.

These shared themes underline a broad consensus across stakeholders for inclusive, flexible, and nurturing environments that respond to diverse needs and promote wellbeing. This common ground demonstrates the potential for collaborative design, shared opportunities and reinforces the importance of engaging all voices early in the process.



Emerging Thoughts :

Design Precedents / Aspirations

Design Aspirations

This section captures the emerging briefing and design ideas informed by the insights gathered through early engagement activities, with stakeholders from St Clement's School. These initial activities have provided a valuable foundation for understanding the everyday experiences, needs, and allowed for some emerging philosophies to be highlighted.

External Environment

The external environment will play a central role in the design of the new school, offering meaningful opportunities for both play and learning. It is more than just a backdrop - it is a space for exploration, growth, and connection. Feedback from the engagement sessions clearly highlighted a strong desire for outdoor environments that are varied, inclusive, and embedded into daily school life.

Sheltered areas and outdoor classrooms could create alternative spaces for learning and social interaction, supporting peer relationships and offering flexible environments for different teaching/learning styles. These gathering points can also serve as quiet retreats or active hubs, depending on need.

Growing spaces, such as gardens, planters, and polytunnels, were frequently mentioned by stakeholders and offer the dual benefit of teaching life skills and strengthening links with the wider community. These areas can become key features in promoting environmental responsibility, sustainability, and cross-generational engagement.

Sensory-rich outdoor environments will be essential to support emotional wellbeing and self-regulation. Elements such as water play, trampolines, sound panels, and tactile features can offer pupils choice, stimulation, or calm depending on their individual needs.

Age (and stage) appropriate play is also a priority. Traditional features like swings, slides, and trim trails support gross motor development and structured play, while multi-use games areas (MUGAs) offer inclusive, flexible spaces for PE and recreational sport. Ensuring accessible play options, such as level roundabouts and wide pathways, will be critical to creating a shared, equitable experience for all pupils.

The chosen site's natural topography could also presents exciting opportunities. Level changes could be used creatively to introduce sledging slopes, climbing features, or hillside slides - encouraging active play while enriching the landscape design. Thoughtful, intuitive routes across the grounds can turn transitions into journeys, supporting physical activity and reinforcing a strong connection between indoor and outdoor environments.

Importantly, legacy elements from the existing school grounds should be respected and, where appropriate, incorporated into the new design. These pieces hold meaning for the school community and can help provide continuity, memory, and a sense of belonging in the new setting.



Emerging Thoughts :

Design Precedents / Aspirations

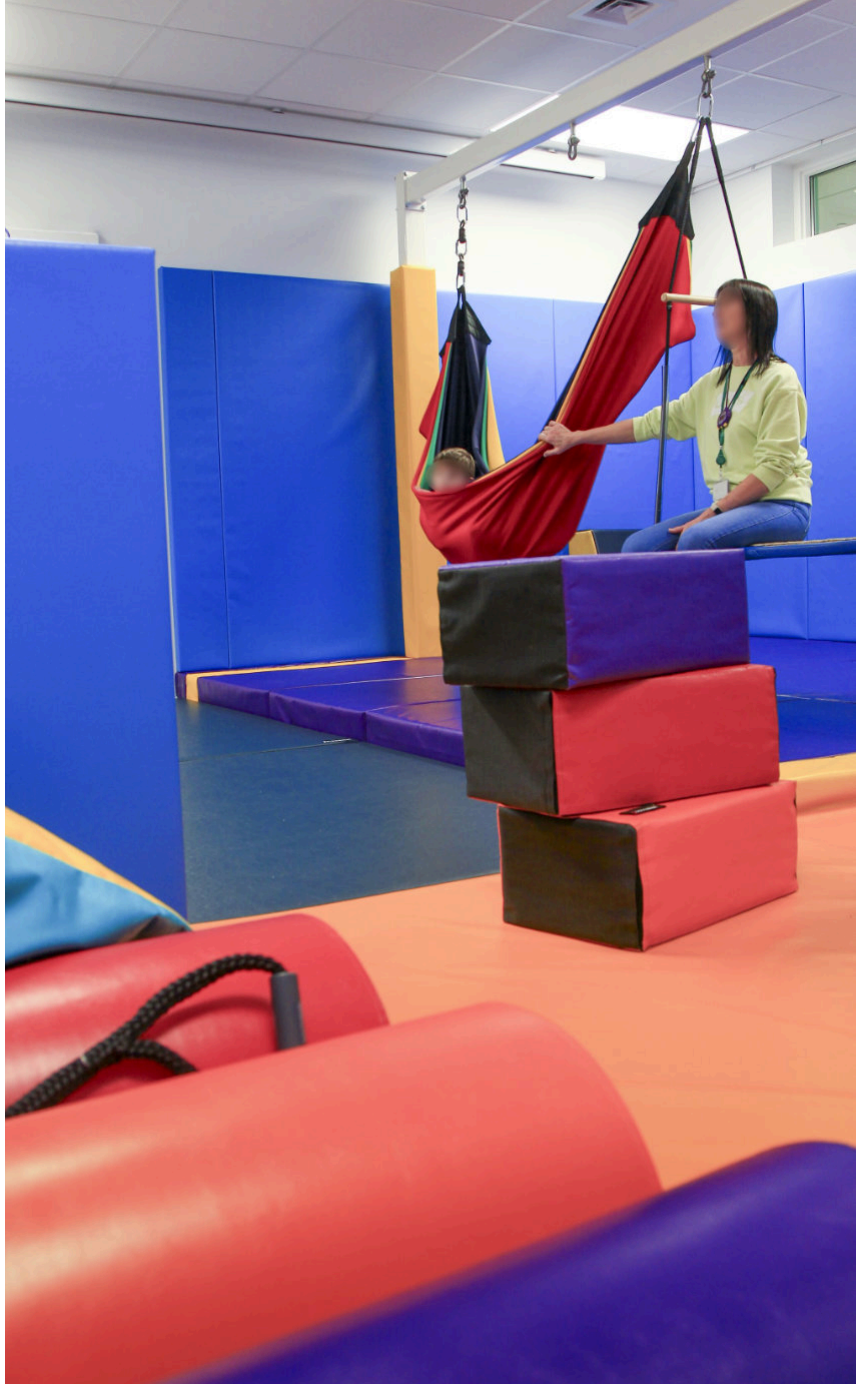
Internal Environment

The internal environment of the new St. Clements School should aspire to fully embody the principles of biophilic design, with a strong emphasis on creating nature-based connections within interior spaces. This can be achieved through the thoughtful use of natural materials such as timber, the incorporation of textures and colours inspired by the natural world, and the integration of features like living walls and indoor planting. These elements contribute to a calming, restorative atmosphere, enhancing air quality and promoting psychological well-being through consistent visual and sensory engagement with nature. The design should also draw upon the guidance set out in PAS 6463:2022, which provides benchmarking criteria to support the creation of inclusive environments, particularly for neurodiverse users. This includes the strategic use of natural light, which has been shown to improve mood, focus, and circadian rhythm regulation - crucial factors for supporting learning and emotional regulation in all pupils.

Building on this aesthetic and sensory foundation, the school's internal layout and functional zones should further reflect these values. Sensory-rich environments, including carefully designed immersion rooms and rebound therapy areas, will support emotional regulation, kinesthesia, and sensory integration. Soft play zones and immersive rooms will offer safe, imaginative spaces where pupils can explore, experiment, and develop social and cognitive skills. To promote dignity and accessibility, hydrotherapy spaces would support physical therapy and relaxation. Additionally, movement therapy areas, such as sensory swing provision can provide opportunities for pupils for sensory seeking, building motor skills and physical confidence through structured and free movement activities.

Experience consistently highlights the critical importance of a well-considered personal care strategy in Additional Support Needs (ASN) education. At St. Clements, we are committed to building a brief that fully meeting these needs. Drawing on recent lessons learned, we are in a strong position to incorporate both successful elements from previous projects and address areas identified for improvement. In particular, the toileting strategy is a key component of the internal environment that must be carefully planned. We recommend that detailed specification and planning around personal care facilities be prioritised - not only to support the dignity and independence of pupils but also to ensure the space functions effectively for all users. This includes close collaboration with occupational therapists to ensure the layout, equipment, and flow of the space are fully aligned with the practical needs of both students and staff.

Complementing these therapeutic and developmental spaces, the school should include a diverse suite of practical learning environments. Dedicated rooms for STEM, music, drama, and home economics - alongside a life skills flat - will allow for the delivery of hands-on, experiential learning tailored to individual abilities and interests. These spaces empower students to develop independence, functional life skills, creativity, and collaborative abilities in a supportive, adaptable, and inclusive educational setting.



Emerging Thoughts :

Design Precedents / Aspirations

Innovations & Opportunities

As ideas for the new St Clement's School take shape, there's an opportunity to explore ways the design and wider project might support connections beyond the classroom. Some early suggestions include shared moments with Dingwall Primary, stronger links with local businesses, and spaces that support positive post-school destinations - all helping to create a more connected, inclusive and opportunity-rich environment.

Positive Destination Creation – Post-18 Opportunities

On-site life and vocational skills hubs: Dedicated spaces for life skills (e.g. laundry, budgeting, food prep) and vocational learning (e.g. workshop/crafts, enterprise cafés, hospitality training kitchens) to support post-school independence and confidence.

Enterprise café or shop: A publicly accessible space run by senior pupils to gain hands-on experience in customer service, food handling, budgeting, and business operations - creating a direct route to employment and skill-building.

Certifiable training modules: Space and infrastructure to host qualifications such as barista training, food hygiene, first aid, or bike maintenance, preparing pupils with recognised post-school skills.

Shared Opportunities – Fostering Connections with Dingwall Primary

Creative collaborations: Joint music, drama, or art initiatives - such as a shared band, school shows, or exhibitions - could foster creative expression and build pride in shared achievements across both school communities.

Shared sports and clubs: Outdoor spaces like MUGAs, cycle tracks, or nature areas could support inclusive sports events and clubs, encouraging interaction while still respecting different needs and learning styles.

Peer mentoring: Opportunities for older Dingwall pupils to support St Clement's pupils through buddy systems, while St Clement's pupils could also take mentoring roles with younger peers. These mentoring opportunities could fall in areas like early learning, life skills, gardening, or shared activities.

Collaborative pupil voice: Joint committees or ambassador roles - such as eco groups, reading leaders, or wellbeing champions - could offer meaningful representation and encourage shared goals between both schools.

Links to Local Business – Maintaining Community Connections

Supported work placements: Collaborate with cafés, shops, and local services to offer tailored work experience with appropriate support.

Business-led workshops: Invite local professionals to run hands-on sessions in school, introducing pupils to different careers.

'Adopt a Skill' programme: Pair local businesses with pupil groups for short-term mentoring or project-based support.

Community garden links: Use shared growing spaces to connect with local businesses, markets, or garden centres for real-world learning.



Next Steps 05 :

Summary | Future Engagement

Summary:

This initial phase of stakeholder engagement marks the beginning of an exciting journey in shaping the future learning environment for St Clement's School. The interim nature of this report captures emerging themes, shared aspirations, and early priorities gathered from pupils, staff, parents, and carers. These contributions offer a strong foundation for informed design thinking and reflect a collective ambition to create inclusive, inspiring spaces that support wellbeing, learning, and community.

As the project progresses, continued dialogue and collaboration will be essential to ensure the evolving design responds meaningfully to the voices at its heart.

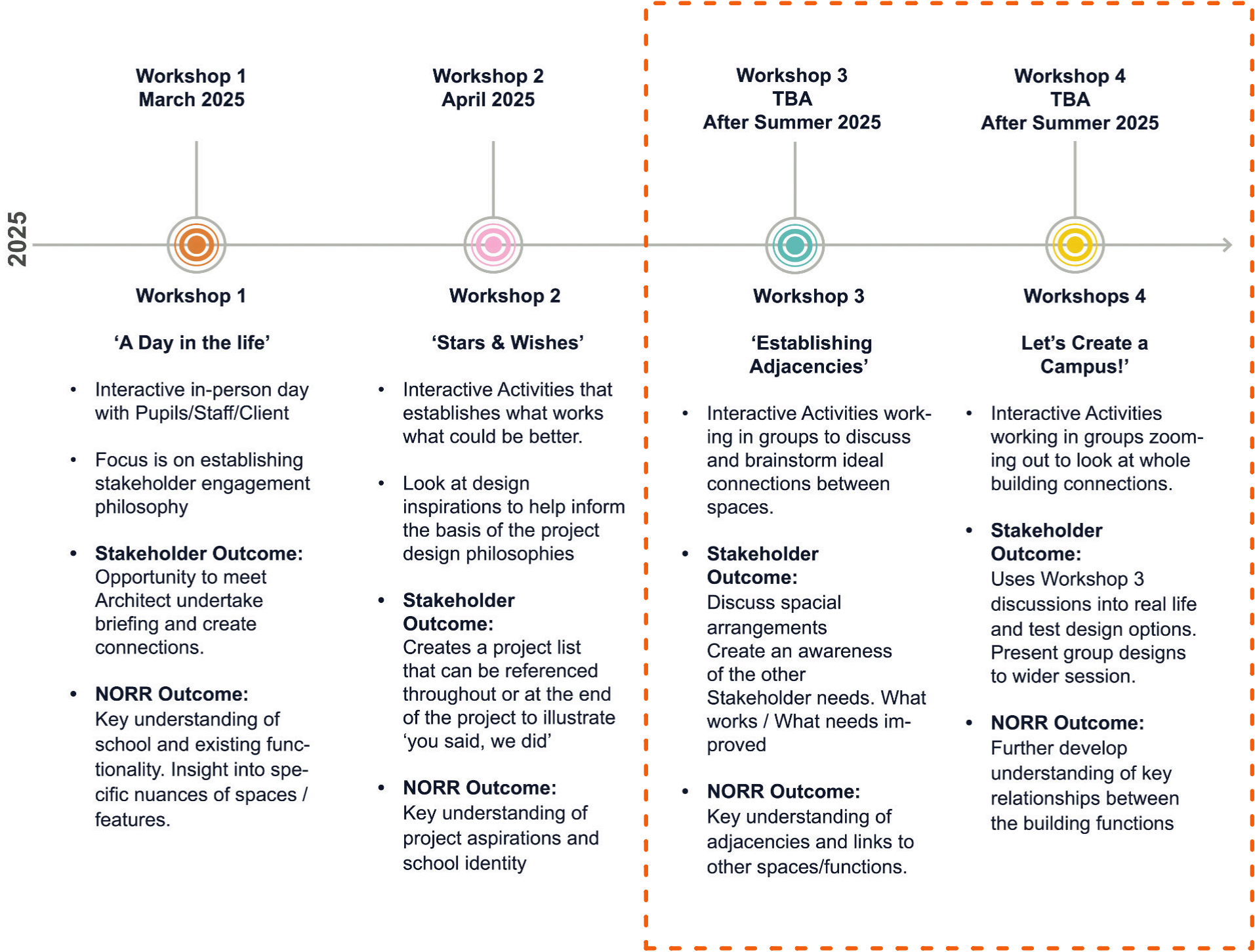
Recommendations:

Building on the foundations set out in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, the initial period of engagement has resulted in a diverse range of insights from pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community. These contributions allow us to gather valuable insights and shape early briefing thoughts and to highlight shared priorities such as wellbeing, sensory needs, inclusive learning spaces, and community connection.

To ensure the briefing and design process continues to be informed by those who will use and inhabit the new campus, it is recommended that the engagement process progresses in line with the agreed timeline. This should include continued dialogue with existing stakeholders and the introduction of more targeted sessions where required.

If the co-location option between St Clement's and Dingwall Primary is taken forward, it will be especially important to deepen engagement with Dingwall Primary staff and parent/carers groups. Their input will be essential to understanding opportunities and concerns around shared use, identity, and campus culture. In parallel, the pupil engagement series should continue, with future sessions potentially encouraging collaboration across both schools to support early connections and a sense of shared purpose.

Throughout this next phase, it will be important to maintain inclusive, transparent communication. Creating clear feedback loops and offering multiple ways for stakeholders to contribute will help build trust and ensure that the evolving design continues to reflect the needs and aspirations of the school communities.



Next Stage of Engagement

