



Morley Newlands Primary School Playscape Design Guide



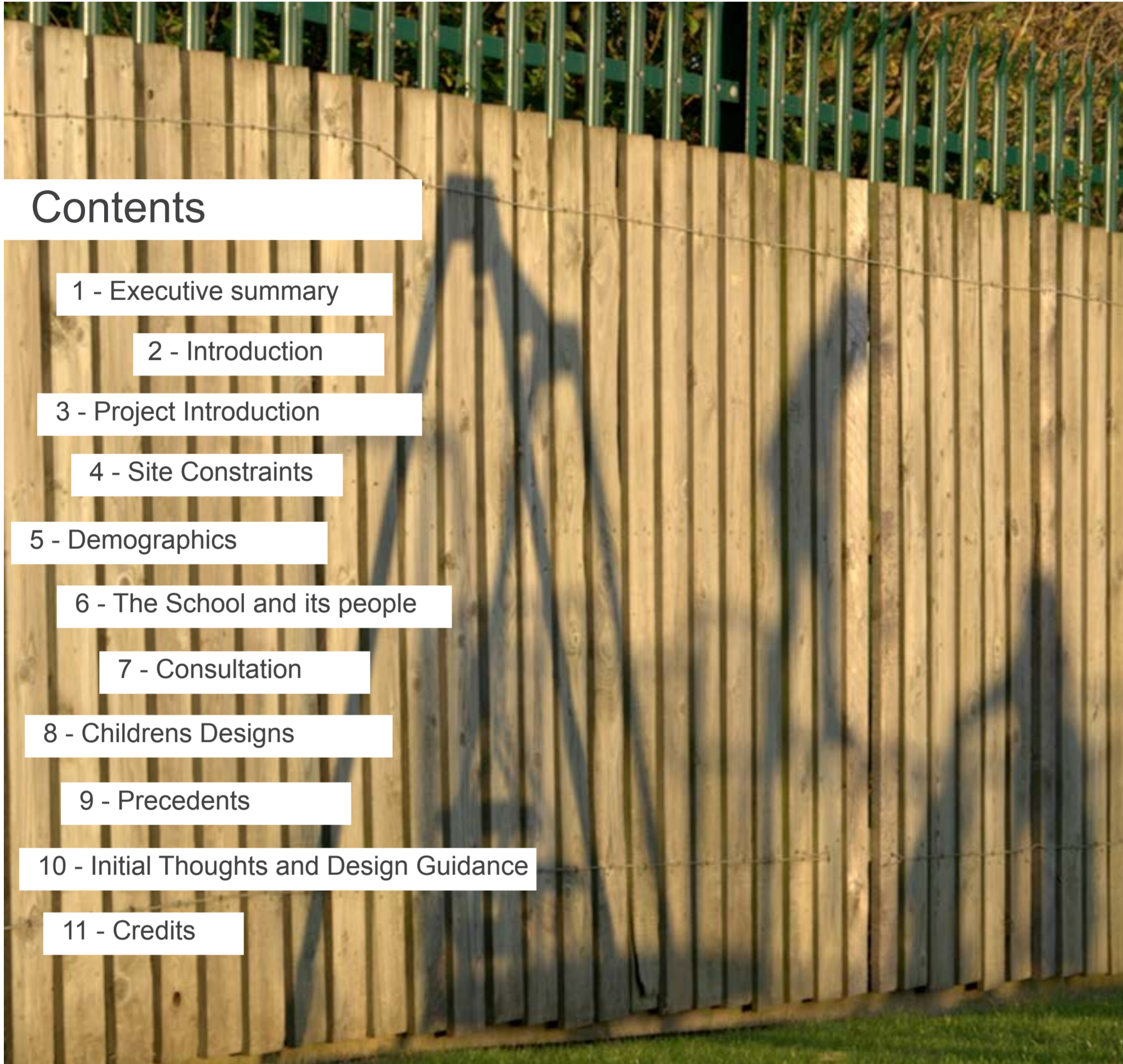
PROJECT
OFFICE

Project Office is a design and research collaboration of staff and students. It is an architecture consultancy concerned with ethical, social and resilient architecture and design. We work with like-minded communities, organisations and individuals.

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Executive Summary



“Ideally a child’s play space should never be finished; it should be in a constant state of change...Children, you know, have a way of creating their own worlds.”

Susan Goltsman

Stage 1: Design Guide

This design guide is the result of collaboration between seven architecture students, the staff of ‘Project Office’ and the staff, pupils and friends of Morley Newlands primary school.

Due to the outstanding progress of the school, the number of students has grown rapidly over the recent years, outgrowing the facilities and moving forward to a state of the art new building. As part of this exciting new development, an area has been allocated within the playground to be designed specifically for the children.

Rather than the use of standard equipment, the school authorities wanted something bespoke, unique and reflective of the schools ethos. In order to achieve this, friends of Morley Newlands approached the project office.

This document is [stage 1](#) of the journey through the consultation process, including research by the students involved, interaction with the children and staff during a session at the school, presentation of the findings and the initial opinions about the direction of the project.

Stage 2: Playscape Design

Stage 3: Construction

Introduction

This design guide will outline the brief for the playground installation. We've called it PLAYSCAPE because it could be anything you could play on or in!

We have covered contextual factors and background information to help the designers in their thinking. We have researched and analysed the school, its environment, landscape and setting.

We have received incredible input from staff and pupils, which help us understand their requirements and needs, all essential to creating an informed design guide.

This design guide also researches what 'play' is.

The design guide ensures that the designers have all the information from site analysis, precedent research and consultation with staff and students required to produce a resilient and beautiful new playscape.



Project Introduction

Project Office has been commissioned by Morley Newlands Primary School to design a play installation for its pupils. The *playscape* will provide pupils with a safe and inspirational play experience. The project aims to produce a structure that not only allows 'play' but also promotes the school's ethos.

At Morley Newlands we strive to deliver Achieving and Enjoying - our school motto. "We believe all children should leave Morley Newlands Primary School prepared for lifelong learning – independent, respectful, confident and caring." We challenge and support all pupils to "flourish academically, socially, physically, creatively, spiritually and emotionally."

Children play best

When adults are watchful but not intrusive, when safe ground lends courage to their discoveries and adventures.

When their trust in life is whole, when they welcome the unknown, and are fearless.

When the world is shared with them. When there are places and spaces they can make their own.

When their games are free from adult agendas and when their transformations require no end-product.

When their senses are directly engaged with nature and the elements.

When they are free to become gatherers, makers, and world creators in their own time and in their own ways.

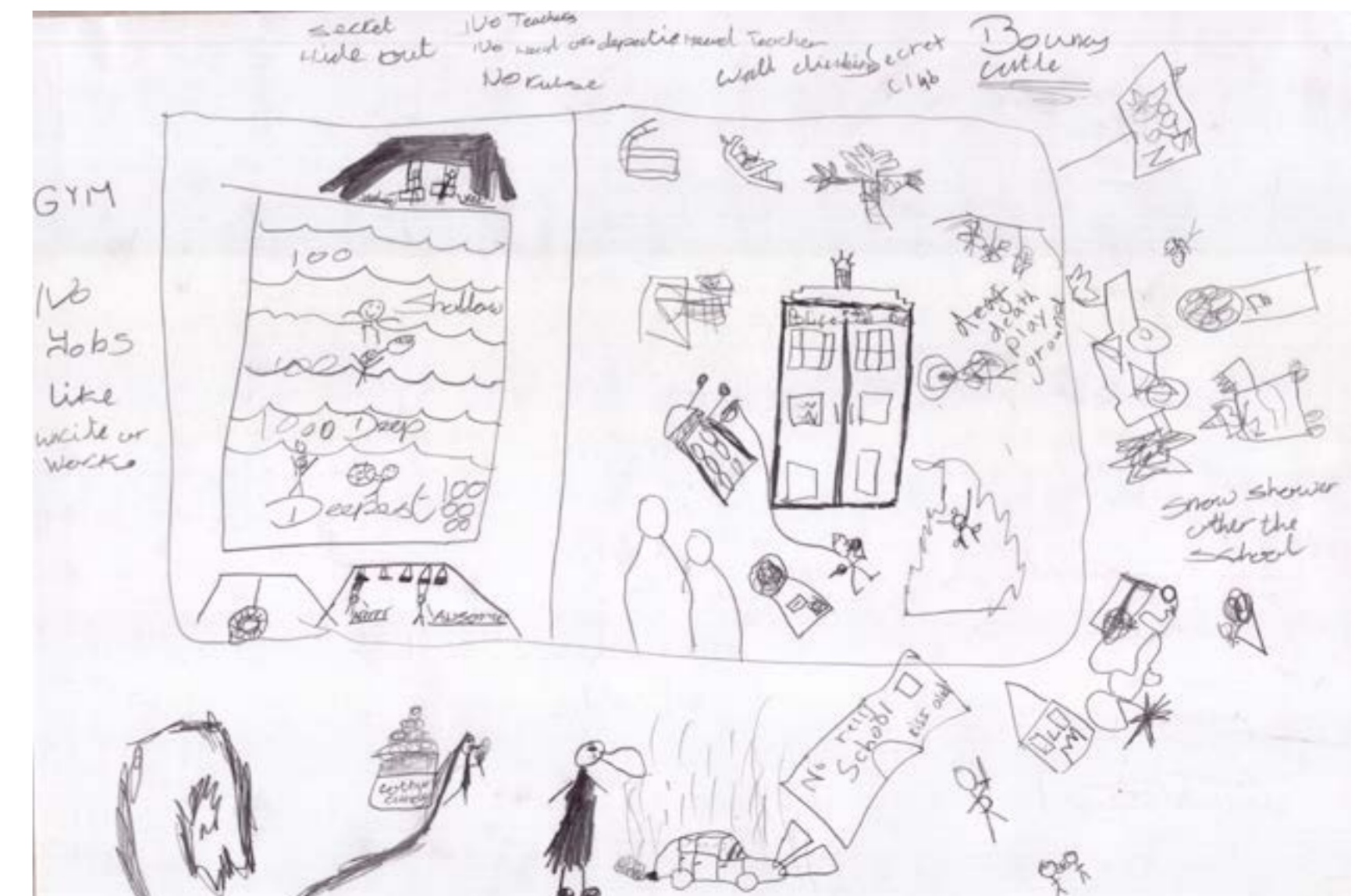
When they can play with others and make relationships.

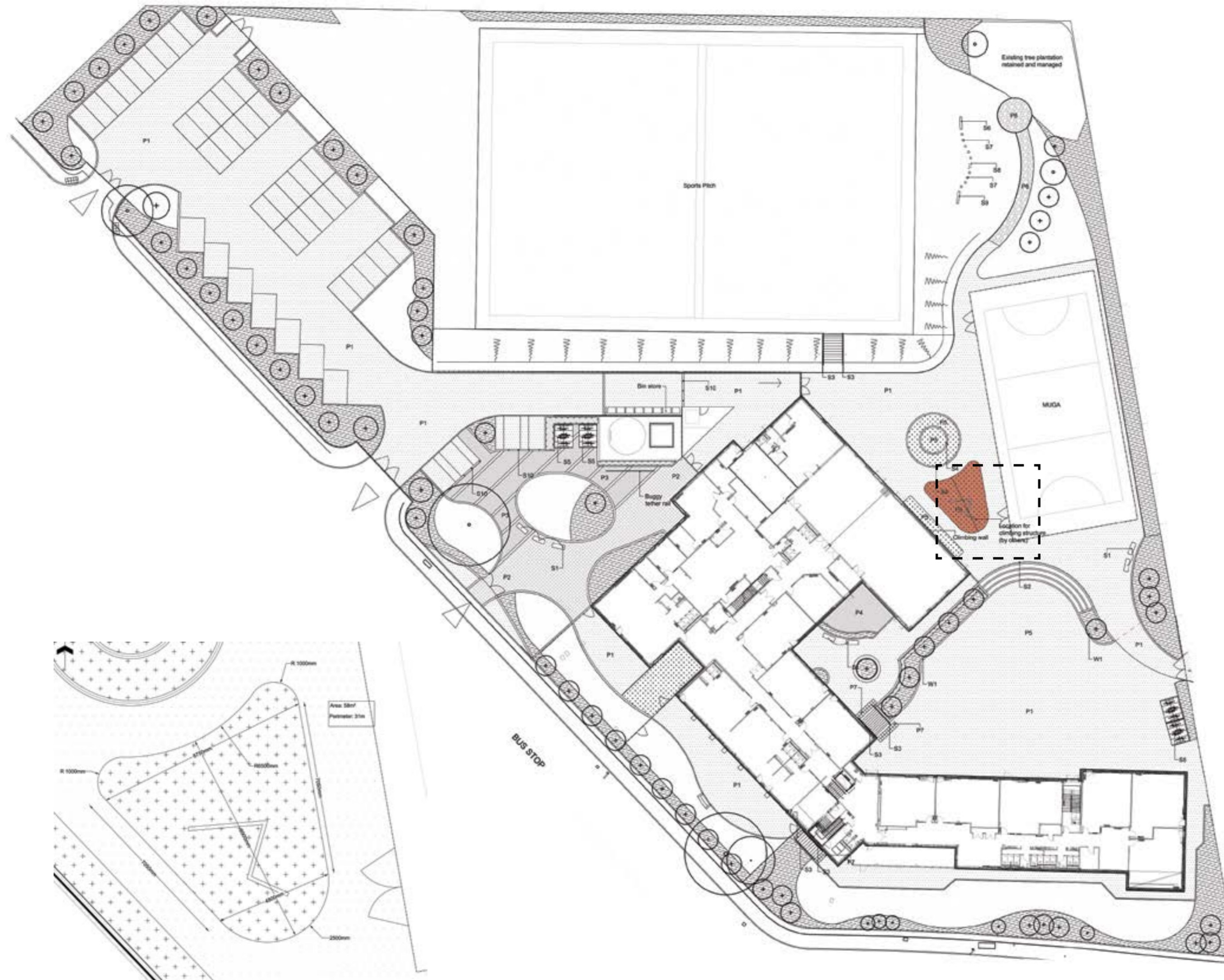
When they can play alone, be solitary and private.

When they can become new selves through their play with others and in their own imaginings.

When they can reveal themselves, their joys, sufferings, and concerns, without fear of ridicule, and when mystery and imagination are not denied by fact.

Sally Jenkinson, from *The Genius of Play*





The approximate location of the playscape is highlighted in colour

The site is area is highlighted in colour. The shape is an area that will be superseded by the playscape but it should not enroach much more than the space highlighted.

The foundations for the new playscape must be cast in June.

The surface area will completed in a safety surface.

Follow Building Regulations and DDA Act for the playscape design. Approvals for the former will need to be sought.

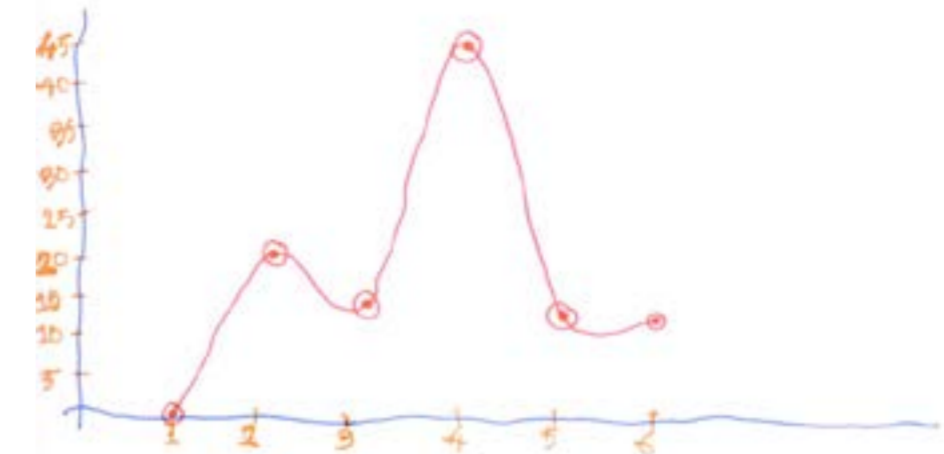
The Site and Constraints

Demographics



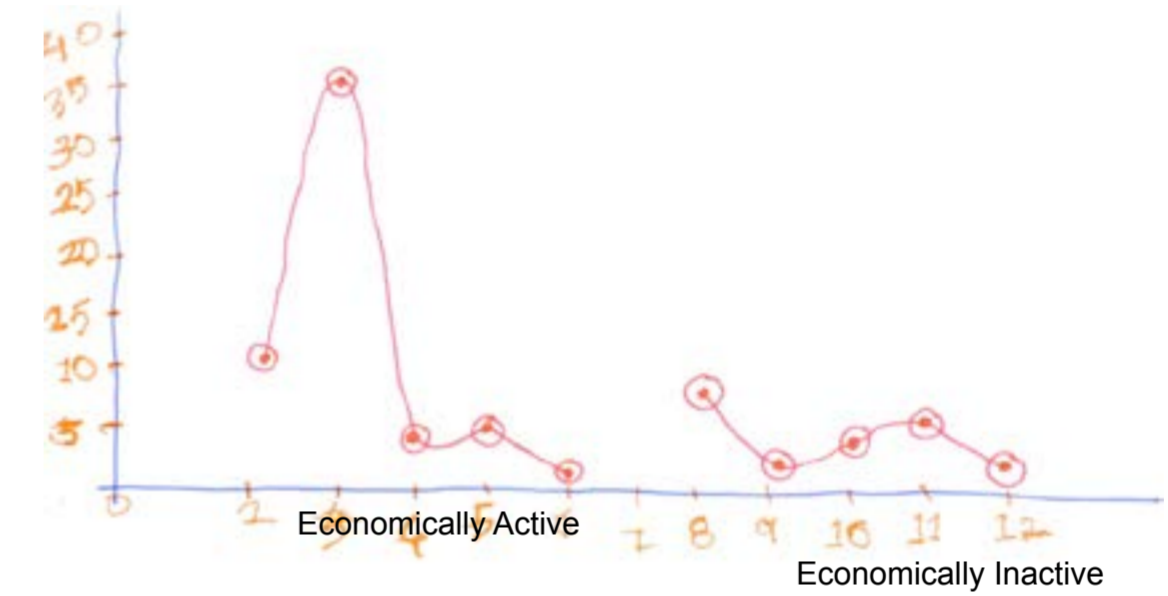
Demographic information helps the designer understand the real life context.

Population by age.



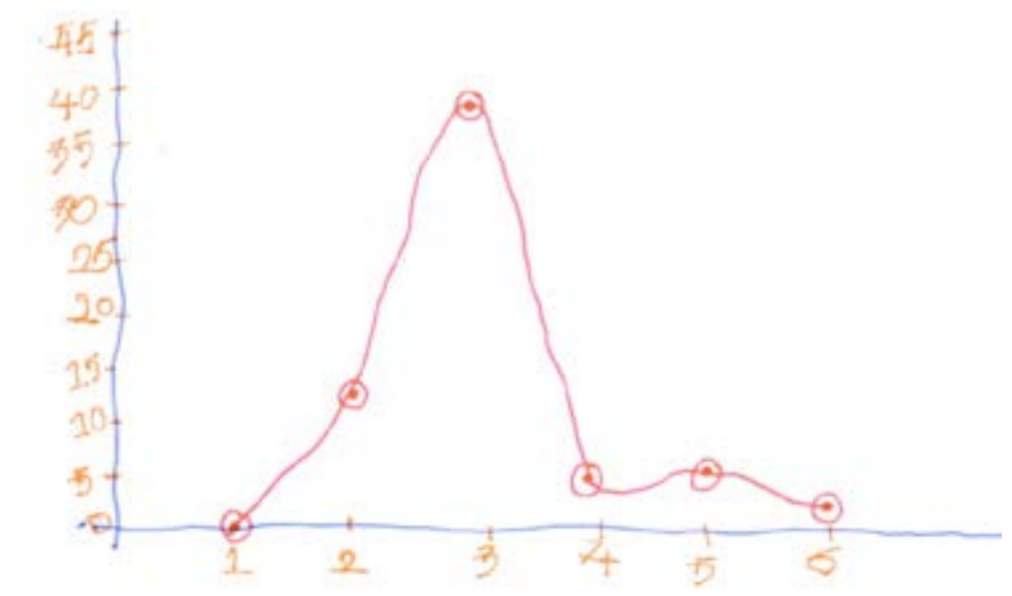
- 1. People aged 0-15
- 2. People Aged 16-24
- 3. People Aged 25-49
- 4. People Aged 50-64
- 5. People Aged 65-above

Socio-Economic Background



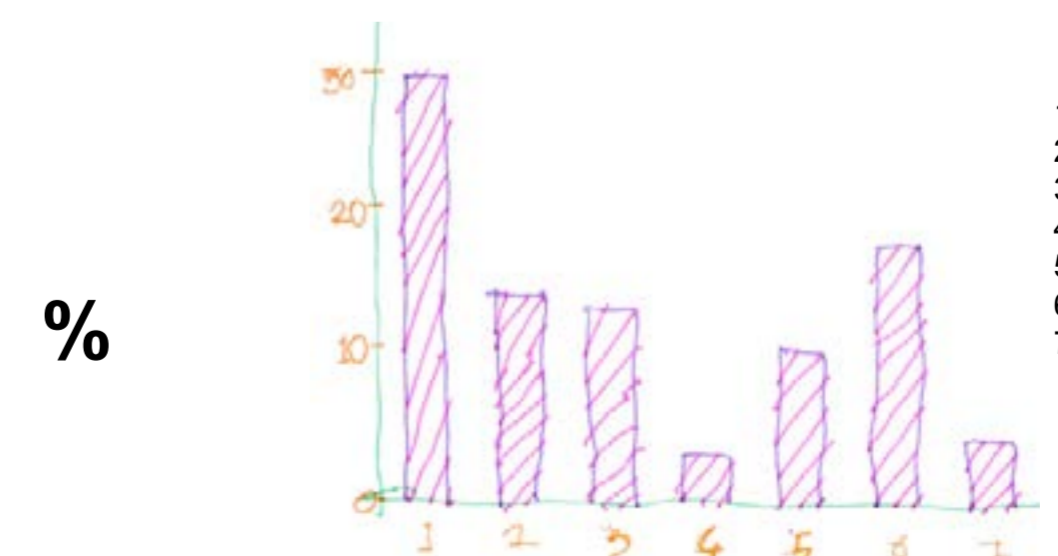
- 2. Part-time
- 3. Full-time
- 4. Self Employed
- 5. Unemployed
- 6. Full-time Students
- 8. Retired
- 9. Student
- 10. Family Carers
- 11. Permanently Disabled
- 12. Others

House typology



- 1. Detached
- 2. Semi-detached
- 3. Terraced
- 4. Flat, Apartment or Maisonette
- 5. Caravan or Temporary Structure
- 6. Shared Dwelling

Education



- 1. No formal Qualification
- 2. GCSE's or Equivalent
- 3. 5 or more GCSE's or A-C grades
- 4. Apprenticeship
- 5. A levels or Equivalent
- 6. Degree or Equivalent or Higher
- 7. Other Qualifications

%

* figures from the Office of National Statistics

The School and its People

Morley Newlands Primary School is in the middle of an exciting period in its history, replacing its old building with a new one that can better suit the school's requirements now and in the future. The new school will continue to be an environment which promotes inclusiveness, independence, respect, confidence, and compassion, whilst maintaining a safe learning environment. Headmaster Adrian Stygall feels strongly that the school should not only be a place for learning and development but also a place that the students will enjoy. He is keen to highlight that school is also a place for *play*.....



The staff and pupils have a good relationship, fostering a learning environment that can be as enjoyable as it is productive. The quality of their teaching is backed up by a recent Ofsted report that commended it as "good and sometimes outstanding" as well as providing strong moral and social guidance that the "pupils respond well to".



"The staff and students have a good relationship, fostering a learning environment that can be as enjoyable as it is productive."



The students, ranging in age from 5 to 11 years old, behave well and "sometimes exemplary", and show themselves as being confident young people. From our consultation experience with them they were very imaginative and clearly play was expressed as an important part of their lives. All of the students were enthusiastic and made an effort to be a part of the consultation. A fantastic range of ideas flowed!

At playtime, the children's imagination became apparent from the range of games and activities they participated in. Their compassion for others was evident as they helped each other when a problem or difficulty emerged.



Consultation with Pupils

Adrian Stygall, Headteacher

"The new school is built from a variety of new materials. It would be nice if the playscape stood out from this in terms of materiality, perhaps using something natural"

"Morley Newlands have a fully inclusive policy which is reflected in the new build. This playscape must be in part accessible to all"

"Due to the large number of pupils in our school this must not be a start finish piece of equipment. This would cause large queues and the equipment would become unusable."

School Council

Examples of the different sports students from year 3 and 5 enjoy and are available in the school are football, rugby, running, netball, skipping, cricket, cheerleading and dodge ball.

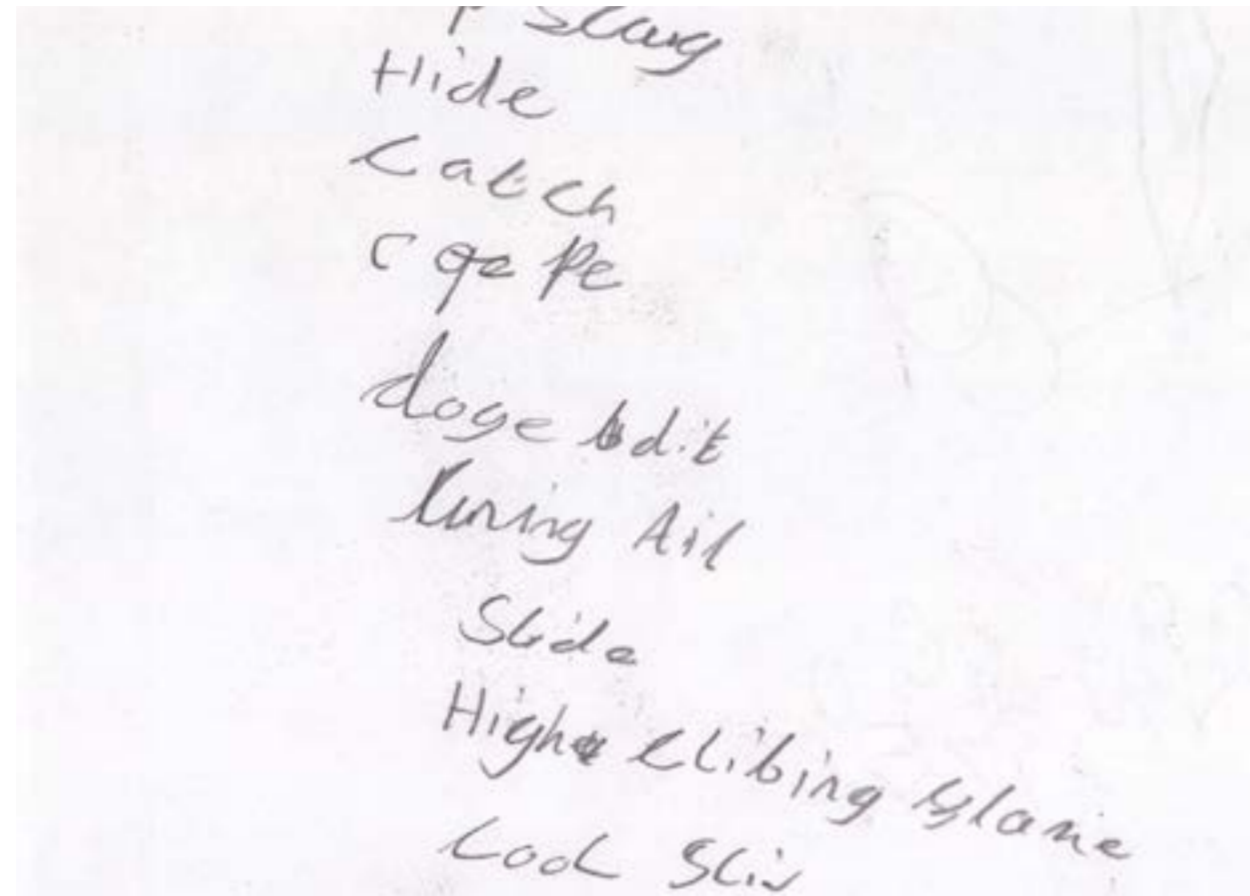
Pupils communicated that were keen to join the youth club, swimming club, scouts, cubs, guides and drama club.

The main games they enjoy playing are Monkey Bars and Tick-tack.

Many pupils aspire to become police officers, architects, teachers, actors, gymnasts, game designers, olympians, and inventors. Could these help with the design of the playscape?

WHEN I PLAY I LIKE TO ...

SLIDE SWING
THINK HIDE
JUMP
THROW RUN DODGE
CRAWL CATCH
CLIMB
FIND HOP
FEEL SKIP IMAGINE
LISTENING



The following comments could be starting points for ideas about the playscape design.

Preserving old school memories

Incorporate the existing school in some way.
Some of the things pupils suggested that they would like to see in their playspace are - zip wire, wall and rope climbing, spinning spider web and ball, slides, swings, tube tunnels.
Pupils suggested themes for Morley's identity that could be used for the playscape such as - Yorkshire, Sunday dinners, buildings, friendliness, different accent, cheap shops, rugby team (Rhinos), flag (Rose) and the owl which symbolises wisdom.

Activities

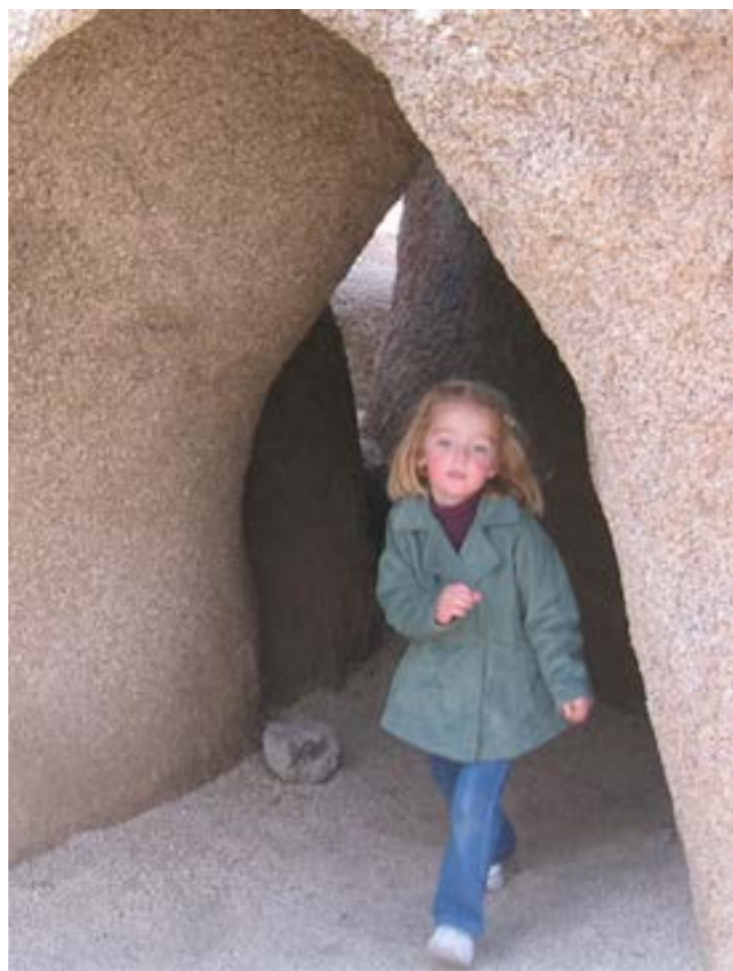
Pupils expressed that the activities that they are passionate about are hiding, running, swinging, sliding, dodging, jumping and climbing.
The pupils were handed sheets with the words playground, den, hobby and game and were asked to draw something based on this.
60 pupils were put in groups of 4, sheets were handed out with 5 examples of play facilities and the pupils were asked to pick 3 of their favourite ones.

Themes

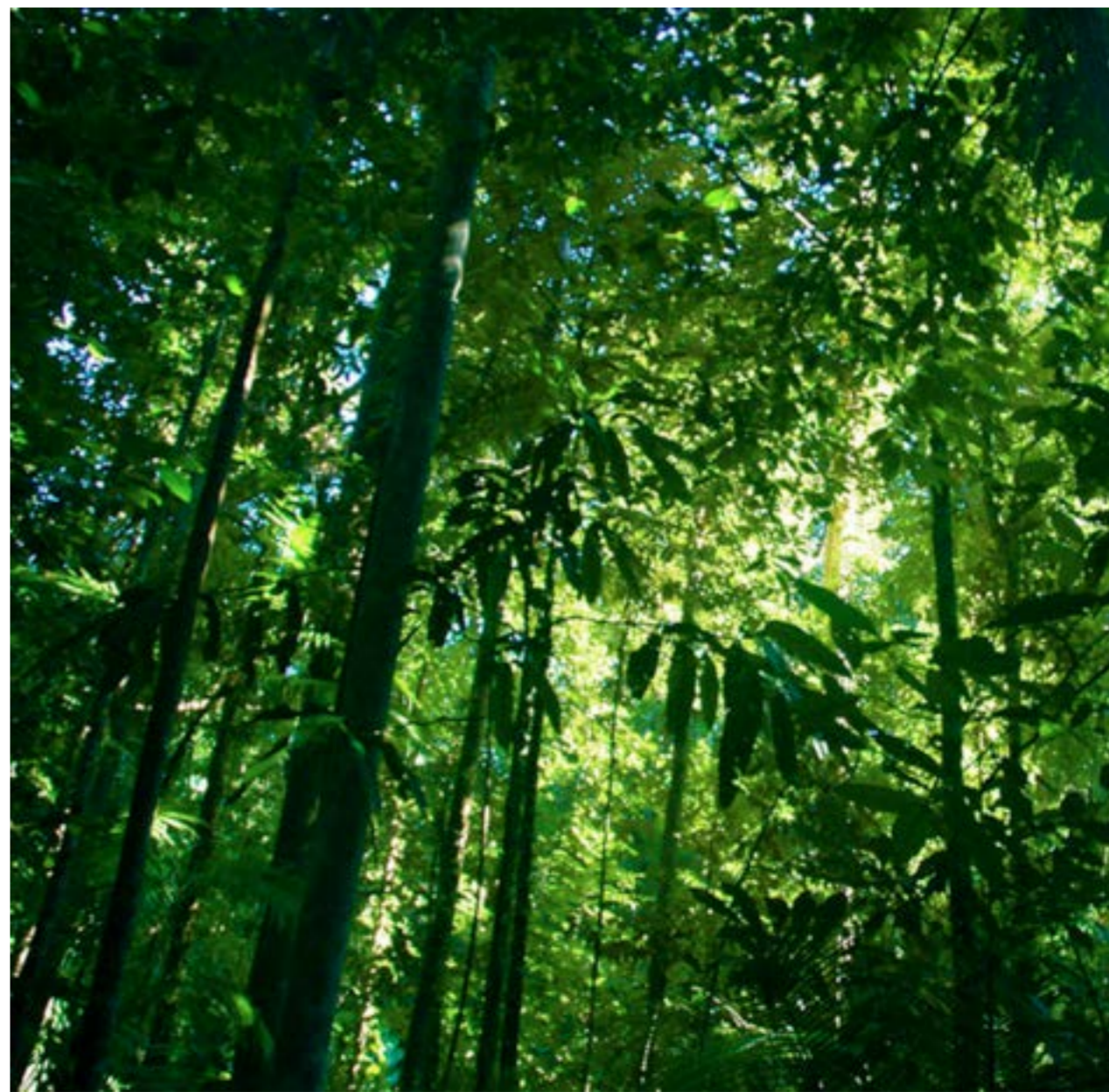
Some of the children considered a themed area a good idea. Some of the suggested themes included Space, Colour, Army, Cars, Sea Life, Adventure, Monsters, Jungle, Castle and Futuristic.

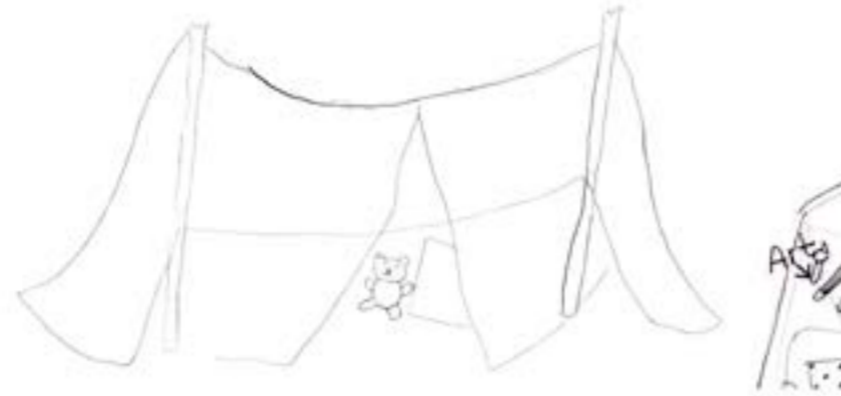
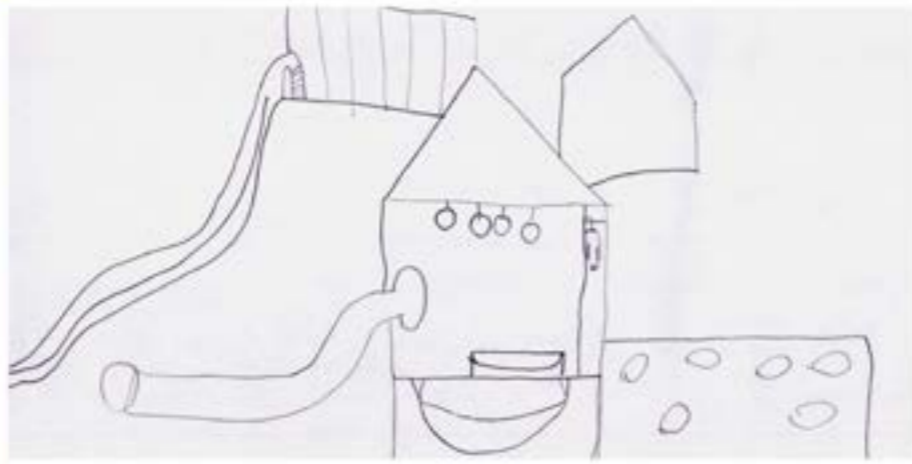
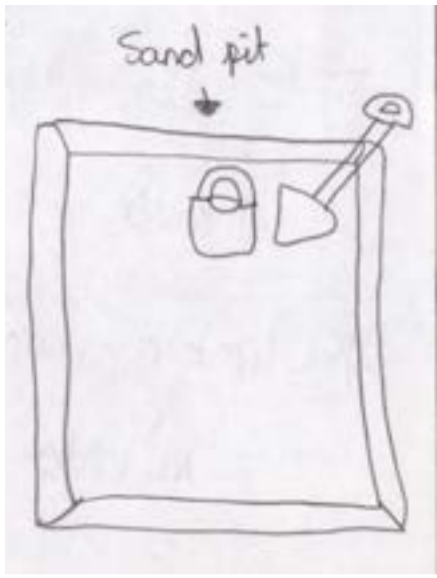
Ideas Generation with Pupils





Pupils' ideas in images

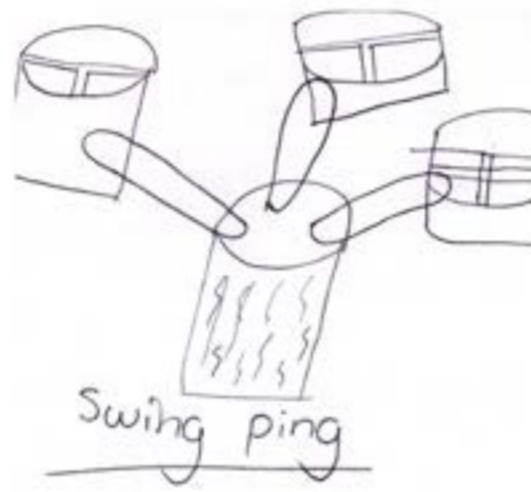




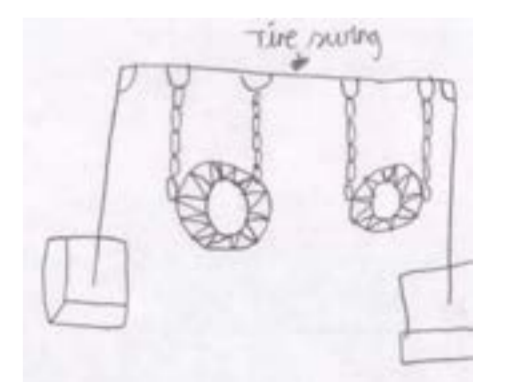
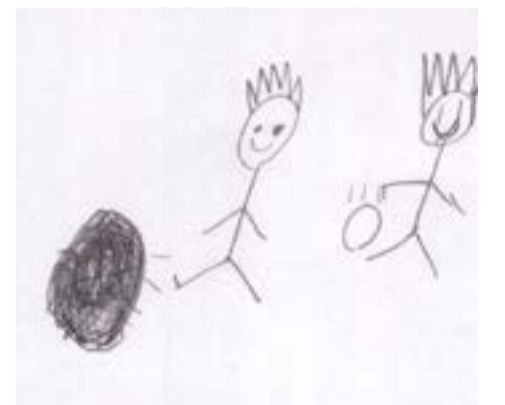
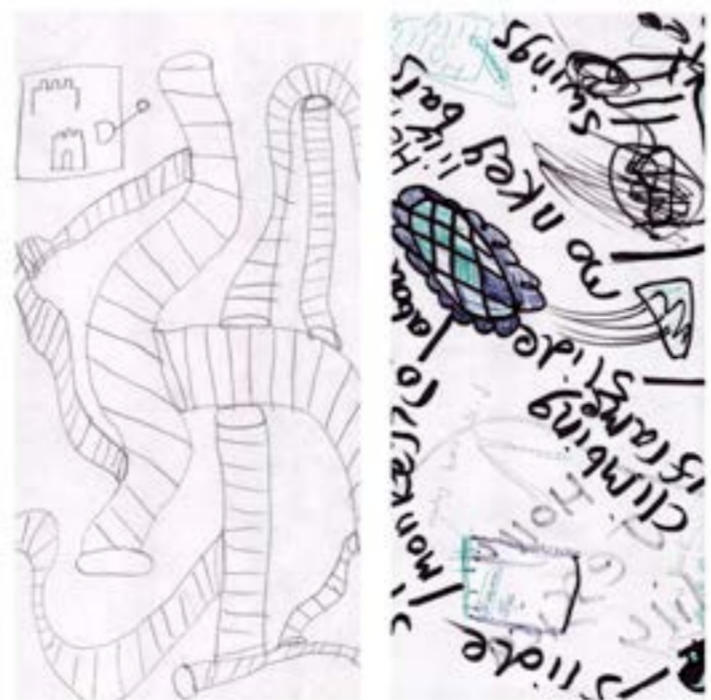
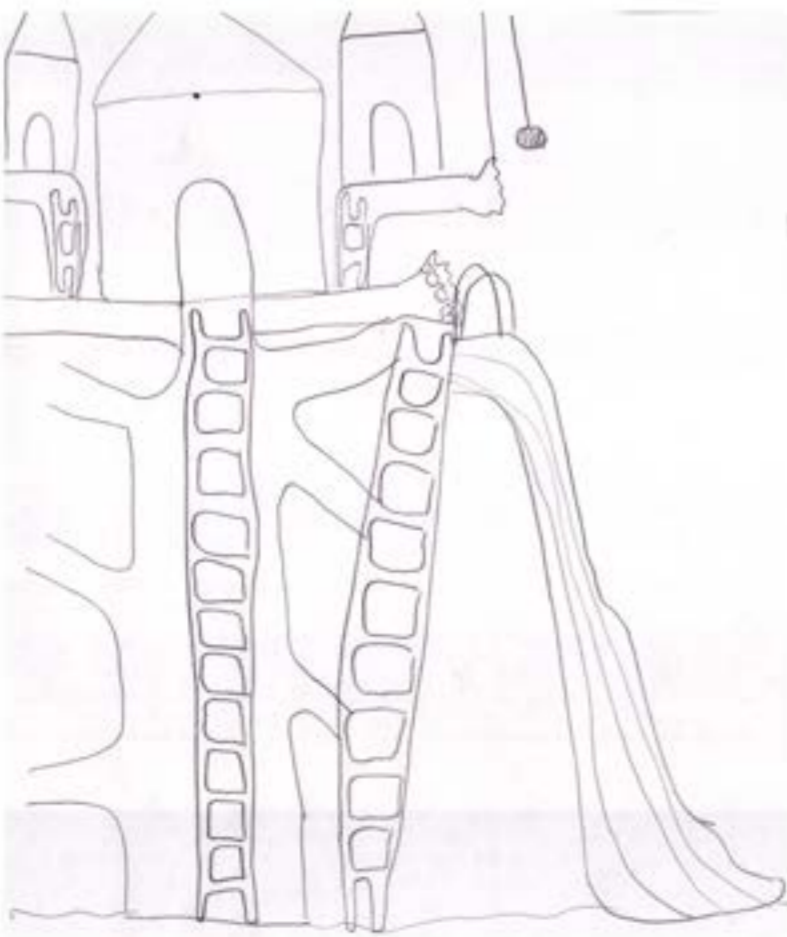
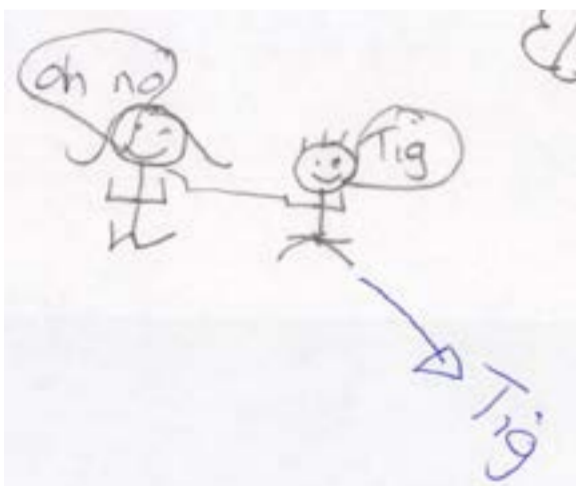
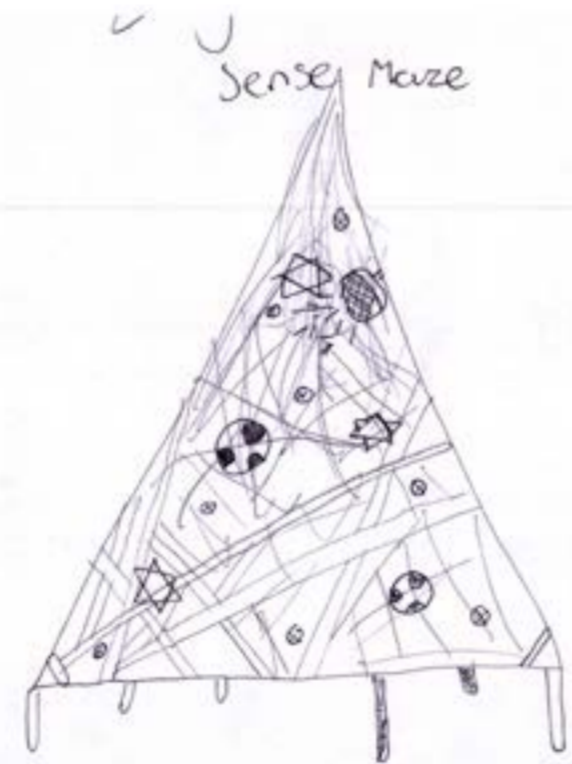
- 1 Sprint - go go go you will be tired!
- 2 Ark trail - try get to the pencil
- 3 Kick and throw the ball in - to the Net
- 4 Make a wrestling Pose
- 5 Finish! See how you did



climbing frame
monkey
pasting bars
swings
slide
hiding place
cache catch
skipping rope
(one of them bars that you tie onto a tree!)



- Monday Bars
- Tennis
- Foot Ball
- Sand pit
- Basket Ball
- Computer outside
- Tv
- Big wheel
- Backs
- Water park
- Dodge Ball
- Foot Ball Pitch
- Ice cream factory
- Hot chocolate factory





Materiality/Changing the Norm: HAKONE SCULPTURE PARK, SAPPORO, JAPAN.

Designer Toshiko Horiuchi Macadam decided to break from the norm of traditional wood and steel when designing her crochet multiple hammock #1 in Japan. Opting instead for vibrant, colourful, fibres to create a unique structure where children could explore and make up their own rules of "play"

Precedents



Can the playspace be used for many activities? Can it be a focal point?



Child Led Design - The Guardian Smart Class 2025

In 2012 The Guardian ran a competition for year 7 school pupils to design a space for their own school. Pupils were encouraged to collaborate across the school and present their designs.

Ideas ranged from hi tech classroom areas to memory capsules and nature areas. The competition was eventually won by Roseland Community College with their idea for an eco friendly school.



Sound - the Singing Ringing Tree near Burnley

Rural Studio students of architecture designed and built this adventure playground in Alabama, USA for the local community.



Thinking creatively about materials and objects that can be used

Can the playspace say something, can it be read?



Initial Thoughts



Design Guide – Guidelines

1. CHILDREN

Children have brilliant ideas. Keep the pupils involved in the design.

2. SAFETY

Adventure is part of play and learning but review hazards. Keep a risk register.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Whatever we build has an impact on the planet. What is the strategy?

4. SENSES

Design with the senses in mind, not just sight.

5. WEATHER

The playscape will be sheltered from prevailing winds but how does the playscape respond to weather?

6. MATERIALS

Maintenance free (as much as possible). Resilient to weather and wearing. Good to touch.

7. INCLUSIVITY

Design for Inclusivity.

8. DESIGN THEORY

Develop a clear theme or themes as a design concept or idea. Pupils have suggested a range of ideas to be considered.

9. CONSTRUCTION

Construction. Is this a self build or contractor build project.

10. PARTICIPATION

Stakeholders to have a continued input to the project.

11. WHAT IF???

Can it be more than about play?

12. FOCAL POINT

Is the playscape a focal point for the school?

13. BEING DIFFERENT

How can you do something different to standard play equipment that still functions well?

14. BEAUTY

It must be beautiful.

15. MEANING

Can the playscape say something or tell a story? Does it have a meaning?

16. RESEARCH

Good research means good design

17. AFFORDABILITY

What is the appropriate use of the funds raised for this project?

Credits

Adrian Stygall (Head Morley Newlands Primary School)
Staff of Morley Newlands Primary School
Friends of Morley Newlands Primary School

The Project Office

Simon Warren
Craig Stott
Waites Construction
Andrew Pye

Leeds Metropolitan University Students

Arpeeta Thakur
Nushoor Al-Mahoozi
Matthew Shepherd
Tony Kangah
Adebanke Adesina
Jack Hartley
Graham Davey

And most importantly all the children of Morley Newlands
Primary School.

Follow our progress at:
www.morleyplayscape.tumblr.com

