

# HOLGATE MEADOWS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

3

**CHAUCER SCHOOL**   **SOUTHEY GREEN PRIMARY**   **HOLGATE MEADOWS**   **HARTLEY BROOK PRIMARY**   **HINDEY HOUSE ACADEMY**

**MEYNELL PRIMARY**   **ST. PATRICK'S ACADEMY**   **FIRTH PARK ACADEMY**

**SITE ANALYSIS**

**The Location**  
The site is in the ward of Firth Park, approximately 5km from the city centre. It has easy access into the city, as well as out towards the M1 for transport, and areas such as Wood Seats for nature. The directly surrounding area is predominantly residential, with several parks within a few minutes walking distance.

**The Building**  
Holgate Meadows is a two-storey, 2300 m<sup>2</sup> brick built school for ages 8-16. The building was purpose built for Holgate Meadows as an SEN (social, emotional and mental health) school 17 years ago. Several of the staff have been there since then and little to no changes or updates have occurred, with the exception of routine repairs.

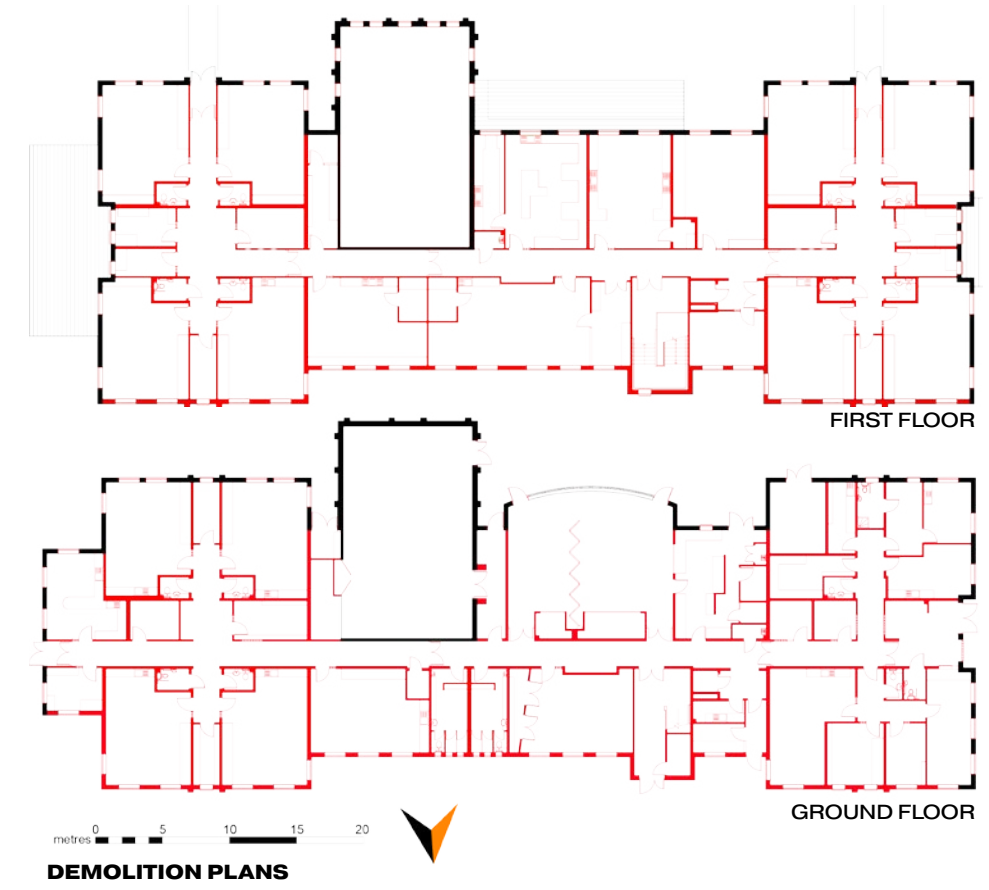
**The Users**  
There is no catchment area for the school as the students are from all over Sheffield and the wider area. Most travel on minibuses and buses.

**The Site**  
The site is situated on a hill facing North, but still receives a lot of natural light. Due to its elevation there is a wide, largely undisturbed view to the North over the valley and towards Ecclefield. The site itself has a large carpark for staff directly in front of the building, with large grassy fields and a playground wrapping around the other three sides.

**Local Schools**  
There are several schools in the local area, ranging from Catholic schools, secondary schools, and a number of primary academies.

**Shared**

gym  
reception  
corridor  
classes  
library



Students and staff generally find their school cold and unwelcoming. When surveyed (arranged by Iyla Butt), people were asked to name their least favourite area of the school, and why they didn't like it. Across all of the responses, there were no spaces that weren't named someone's most disliked. This ranged all the way from tech subject rooms such as Art and DT, to outdoor spaces, the entrance, and the staffroom, amongst others. Some of the reasons for people not liking these spaces were: very dark, cold, too loud, small, too big, lack of equipment, unpleasant atmosphere, lack of storage, damaged easy, and so on. The most prevalent of these were dark and cold. In order to try and mitigate these issues, I chose to set the demolition plan as shown above, redesigning almost the entire floorplan. I chose to do this to allow me to enable light to reach further into the building, and so create a better atmosphere throughout the school.

# EXISTING



Holgate Meadows School  
and



EB  
LB

### Student Survey

Holgate Meadows School - Sheffield Hallam University

Q1. What do you like to do in your spare time?  
play with girlfriend

Q2. Which space do you like most about the school and why?  
sensory room because it helps me calm

Q3. Which space do you like least and why?  
fish bowl because people can kick in

Q4. What do you do as an outlet for your emotions? For example, what might you do to help control how you feel?  
punch a pillow my own space

Q5. Draw a picture and use 3 words to describe your idea of a perfect school.  
nothing

Most common words from Student surveys:  
"Sensory, weird, destroyed, old, awful, outside, calming, computers, gaming, playground."

### Teacher Survey

Holgate Meadows School - Sheffield Hallam University

Q1. Which space do you like most about the school and why?  
The Christian room as it is used in a positive way for pupils and staff.

Q2. Which space do you like least and why?  
The staff room as it is a waste room not really a room enough room to sit and eat

Q3. What are some challenges that teachers face due to the design of the school?  
Classrooms too small and badly designed.

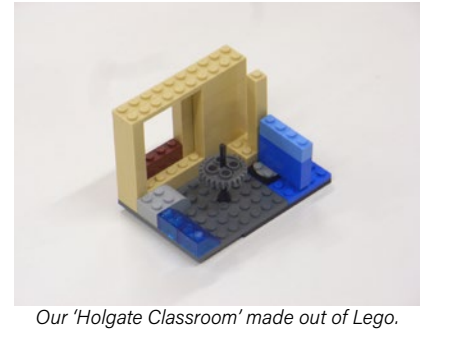
Q4. What are some of the most effective sensory aspects for students in your school?  
NONE

Q5. Draw a picture and use 3 words to describe your idea of a perfect classroom.  
Cosy, spacious and user friendly.

Most common words from Teacher surveys:  
"Spacious, warm, light, clean, organised, outdated, interactive whiteboards, soft, natural, wood, blue, textured."

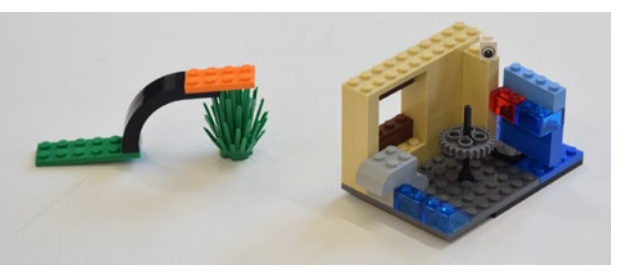
## The Lego experiment

We utilized a Lego Serious Play kit to construct a model of the current classrooms at Holgate. Lego Serious Play is designed for enhancing team-building and promoting constructive feedback in various settings, including both high-level corporate business teams and school-age adolescents. Given the students' difficulties with abstract thinking and metaphors during previous interactions, we designed our own model, allowing them to customize it for a more relatable and accessible experience. Throughout the process, we had meaningful conversations with the students, and the building and selection of pieces provided valuable insight into their perspectives.



Our 'Holgate Classroom' made out of Lego.

A Holgate student modified the Lego Serious Play model, adding some noteworthy features, including an 'eye' representing CCTV, blue and red blocks signifying heavier doors, a slide structure for a better playground, and a tree representing improved green spaces. Our conversations with the students were not limited to the model but also touched on their personal interests, hobbies, aspirations, home life, and dreams. The experience of engaging with these students was just as informative and impactful as the architectural models we created. It provided valuable insight into the thought process and connections made by individuals with autism and helped broaden our perspective.



Q1. What do you like to do in your spare time?  
go out

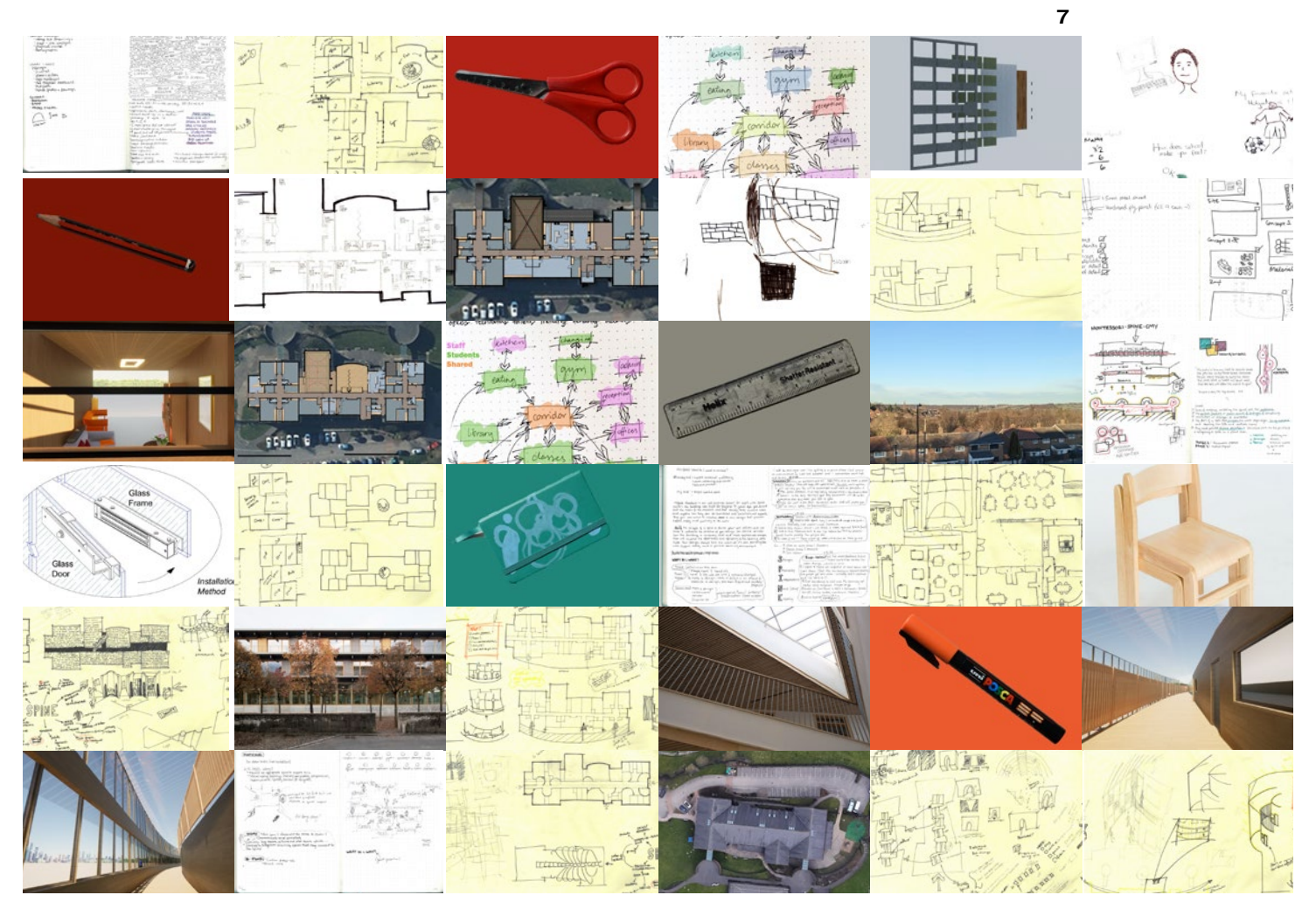
Q2. Which space do you like most about the school and why?  
Gym room

Q3. Which space do you like least and why?  
autisayd

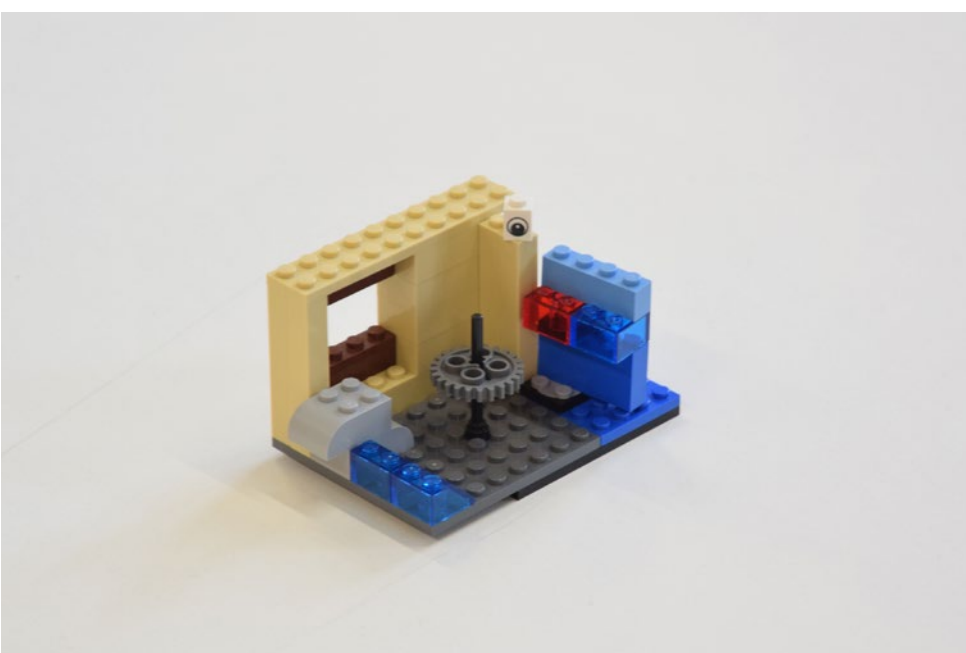
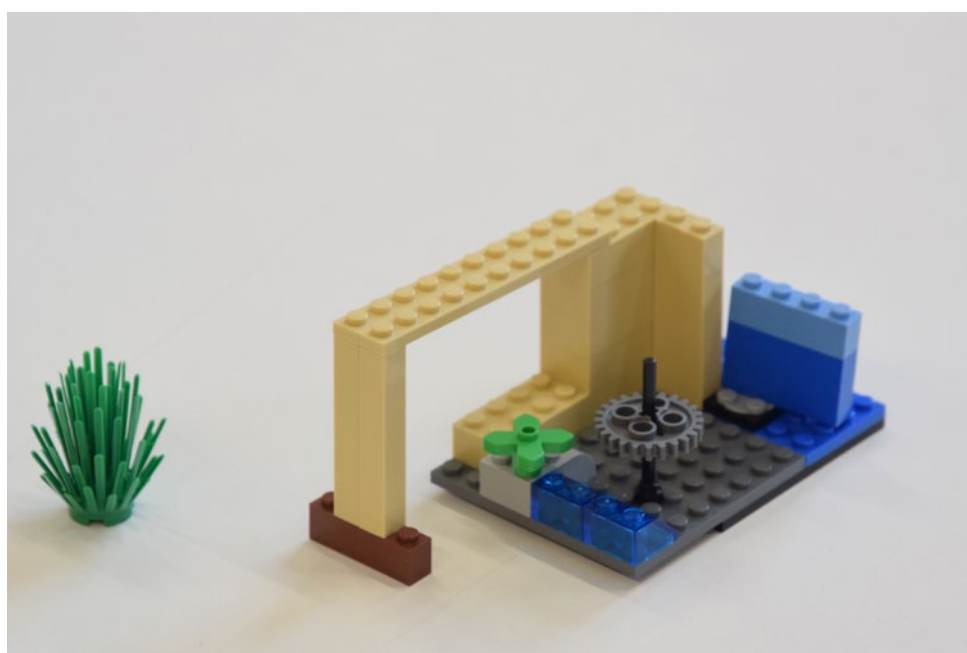
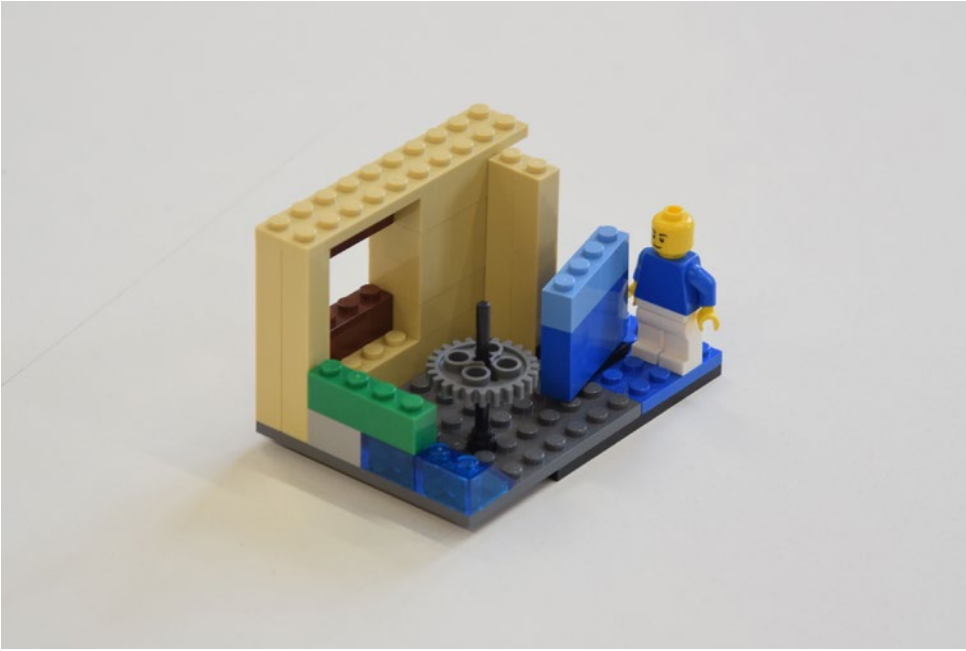
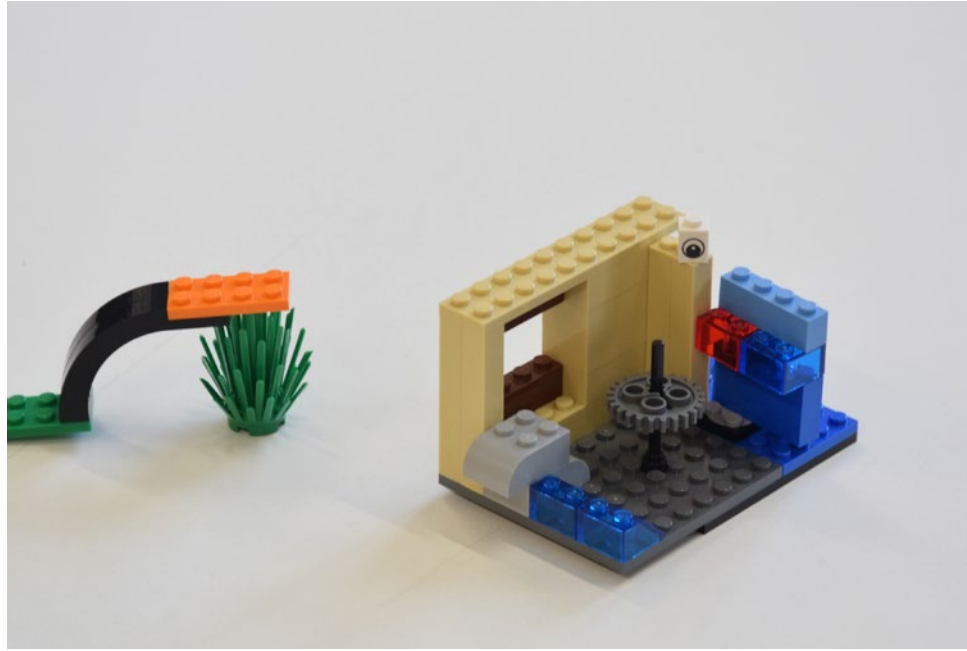
Q4. What do you do as an outlet for your emotions? For example, what might you do to help control how you feel?  
? dont now

Q5. Draw a picture and use 3 words to describe your idea of a perfect school.  
Holgate

One pragmatic example of fostering community engagement is through the use of Arki-nopoly, a toolkit created by Arki-Lab (Denmark) that takes the form of a modified Monopoly board. Arki-nopoly uses play as a means to generate critical feedback and insights from community members who may not typically have their voices heard. This accessible and important method of engaging people in the design process helps to gain a deeper understanding of context and individual needs, which is vital when working on social design projects. To be effective, this process should be streamlined to maximize the amount of feedback obtained per session, and it should be easily repeatable with new parameters. Arki-nopoly has achieved this goal, and the Lego workshop that we conducted could be expanded upon to similarly achieve it.



# DEVELOPMENT

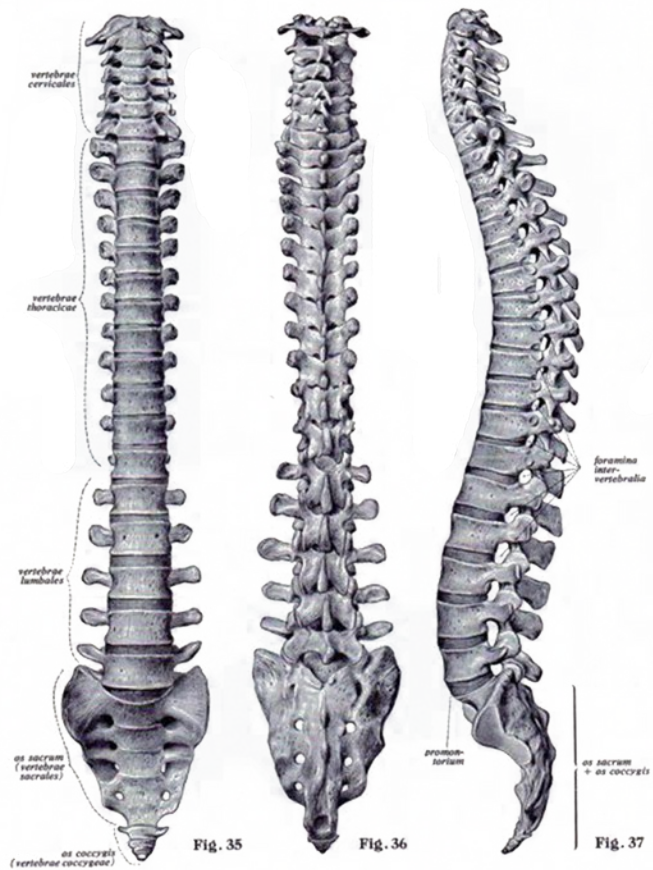


Around halfway through this project, I went with a small group of my peers back to Holgate Meadows, to hold a focus group with a group of selected students and teachers. When we were there, we had two activities for the children. One was based around drawing and colouring. We brought templates for the children to draw their thoughts and feelings, as well as encouraged them to answer five questions though drawing or writing. From this we gained a much better understanding of what the students thought of their school, and what they hoped for the future. This reinforced the importance of this project, through speaking to the people who will gain the most from the work we do.

The other activity was Lego building. We took a small model of a classroom at Holgate Meadows and encouraged students to add or take away any bricks, explaining what they were changing and why. This gave us a great insight into design details that we could incorporate, as students mentioned things from cameras, better doors, group tables and outdoor play.

# FOCUS GROUP

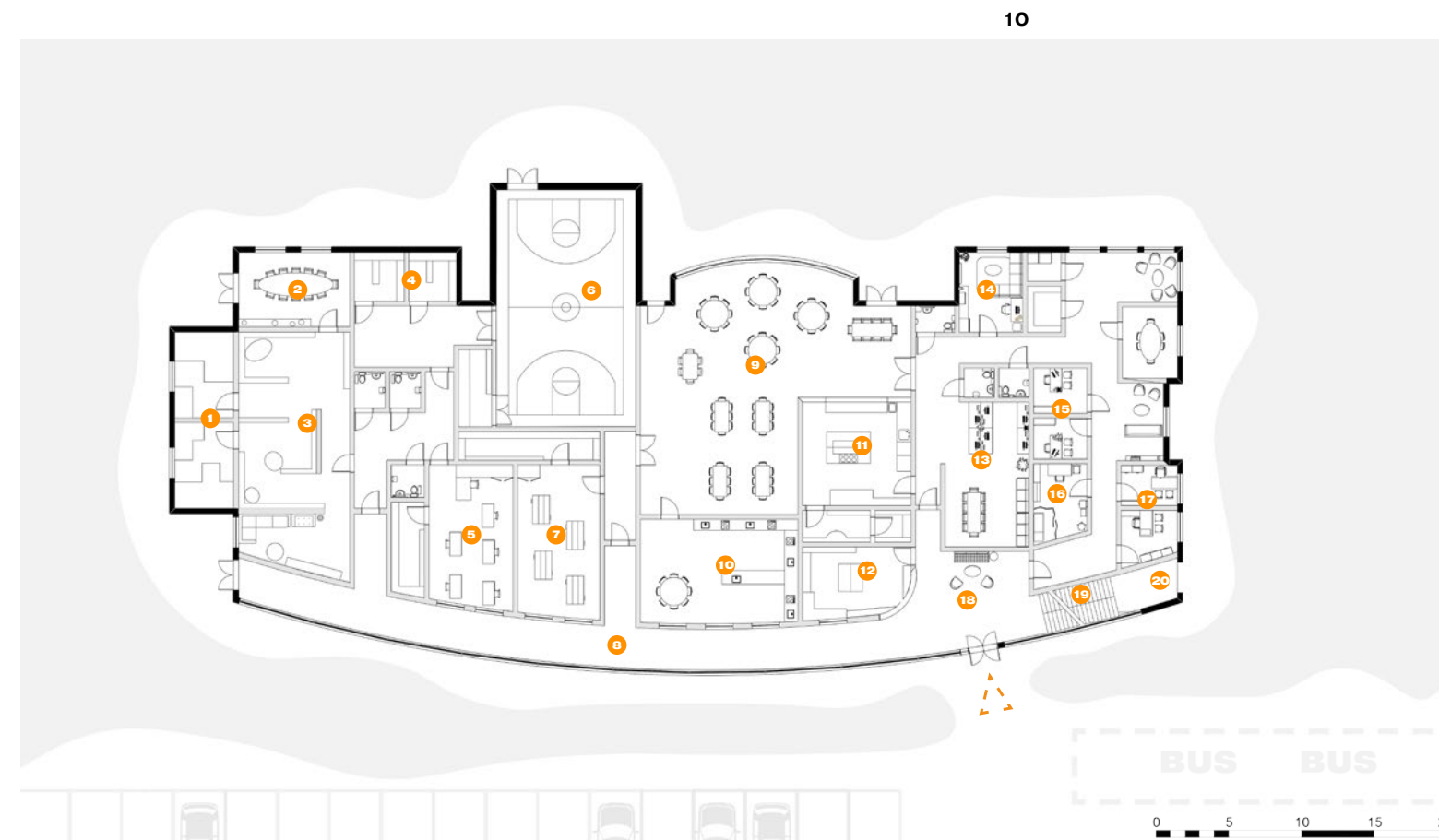
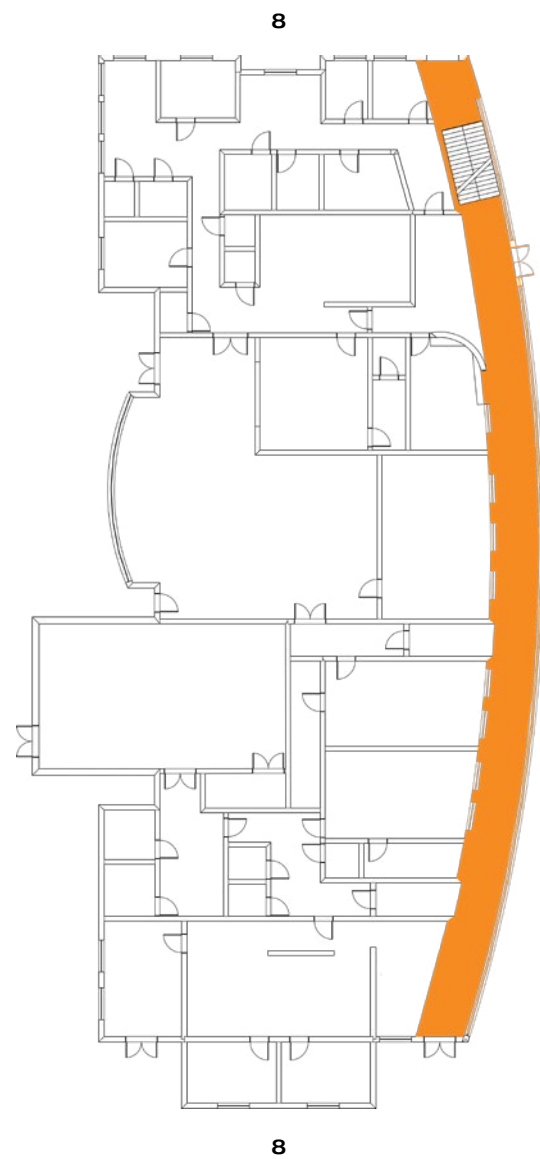




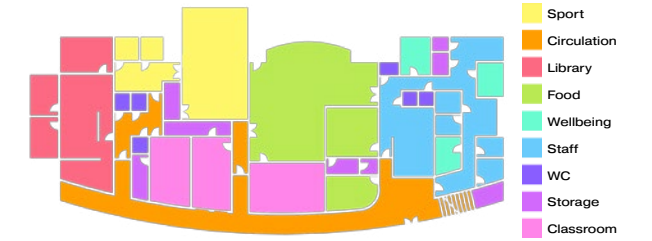
# SPINE

*His body is bracing itself to absorb shock the pilot the blurry these spinal vertebrae they're heavy enough to carry his mass the atlas bone is where his skull rests and the axis will allow his world to spin.*

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers

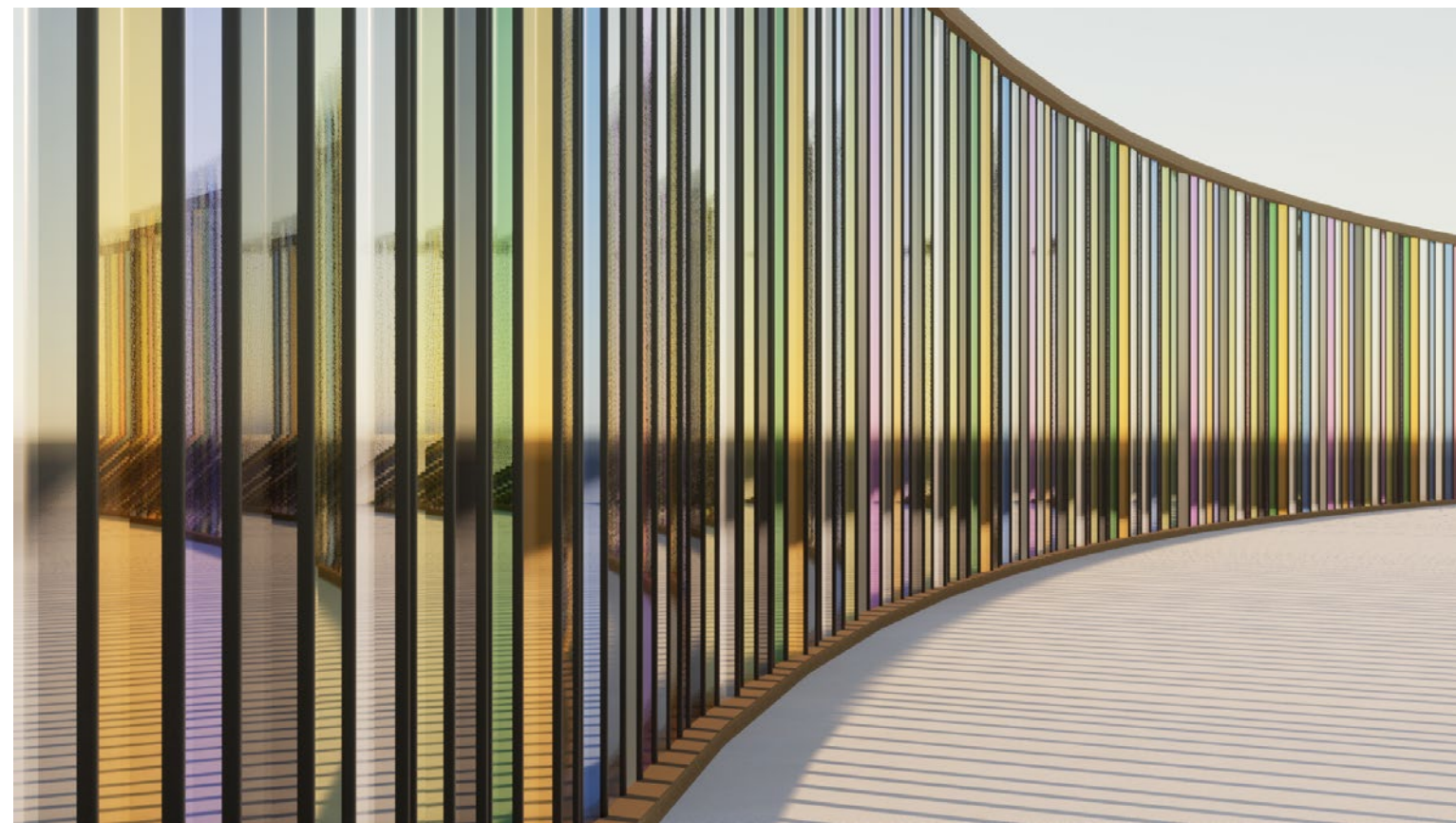


# GROUND FLOOR



- 1 Sensory rooms
- 2 Shared meeting room
- 3 Library
- 4 Changing rooms
- 5 Art classroom
- 6 Sports hall
- 7 DT classroom
- 8 Corridor
- 9 Canteen
- 10 Food classroom
- 11 Kitchen
- 12 Reception and admin
- 13 Staff workspace
- 14 Staff wellbeing room
- 15 Staff offices
- 16 Medical room
- 17 Leadership team offices
- 18 Entranceway
- 19 Stairs to first floor
- 20 Plant room

The ground floor houses the library, gym, canteen, tech classrooms and staff areas. After entering the school, the first two things that are seen are the reception to the left, and the door to the staff area directly ahead. Inside the staff area there is an open plan work area, toilets, private wellbeing room and a meeting room. There are also two private offices that may be used by any member of staff, two offices that are designated for the senior leadership team, and a medical room. The second corridor along the curve leads to the canteen and food tech room, and the first corridor connects with both the gym and changing rooms, and the library and sensory rooms. There are also two other classrooms on this level for art and DT. By putting them on the ground floor, classes will need to walk downstairs into these spaces. There are also a number of fire exits on this floor, and large windows to bring in as much light as possible.



# THE CURVE



# RECEPTION

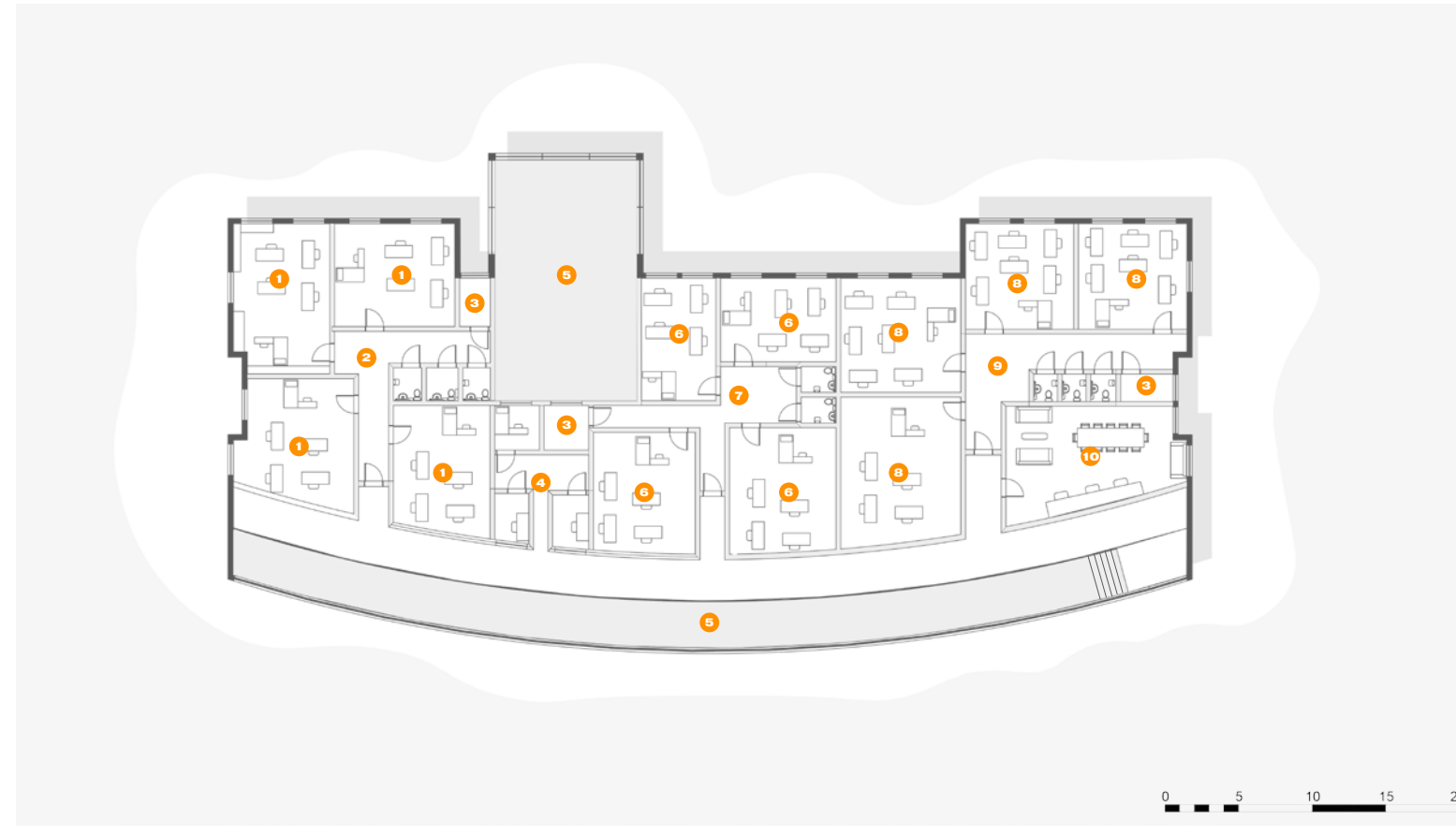
The reception is the first point of contact with the school, whether that be through phone call and emails, or in person right when you enter the building. With that said, it should be an exciting and welcoming space that attracts people inside. Currently, there is a large, heavy, wooden door leading into a small reception area. There is a buzzer to get in and the admin space itself is behind a closed door, behind the reception desk. There is no sight to any other part of the school.

In my proposal, I have moved the entrance to the side of the building, where my large, curved, glass wall extends along the length of the building. The reception space is open and has seating for visitors. The admin office has the reception desk built into the wall, so that it is connected to the space and visitors will be seen as they approach the door, and the space is immediately connected to the circulatory corridor, allowing for a long, unbroken view over Ecclesfield.





# CORRIDOR



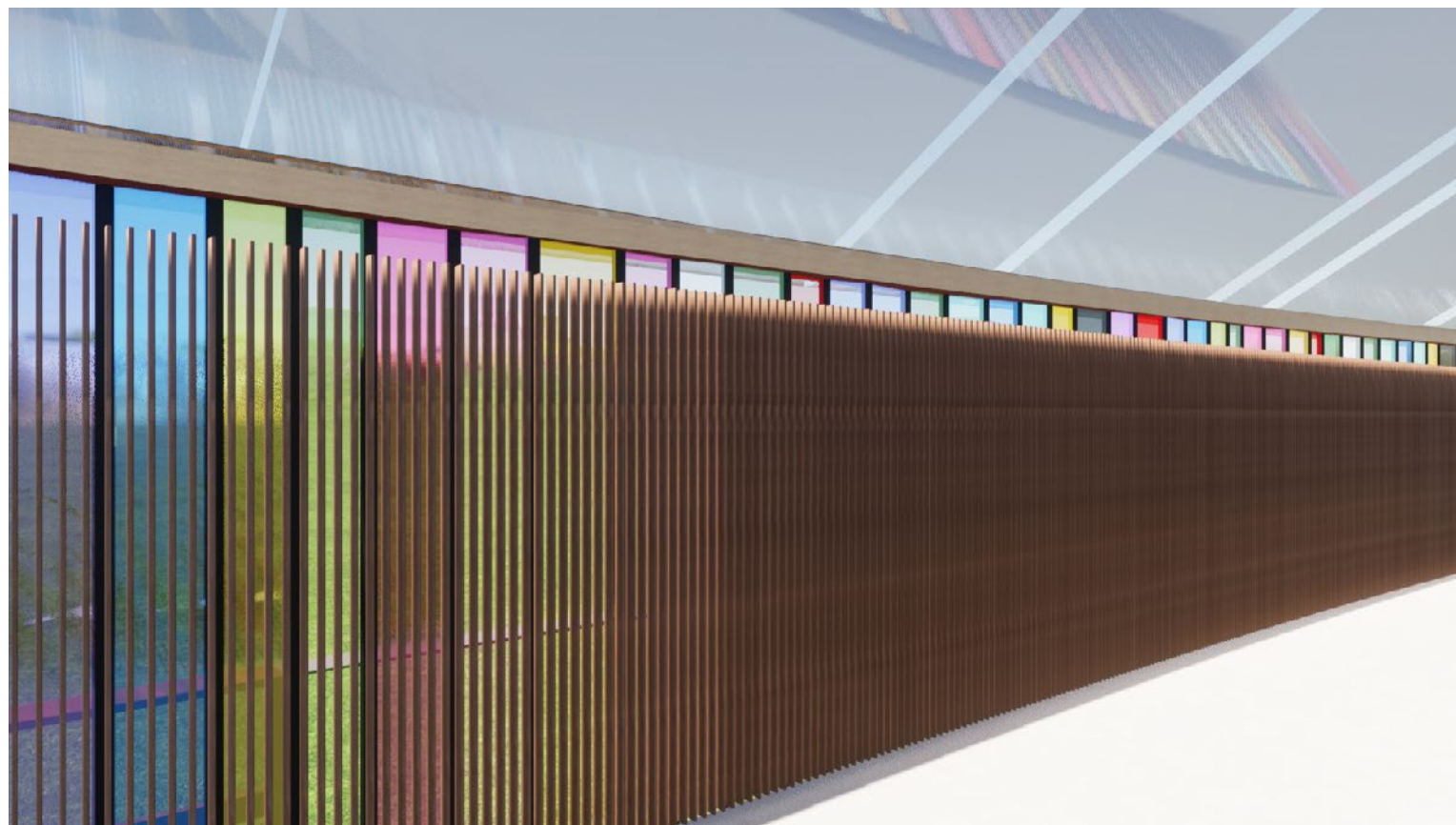
# FIRST FLOOR



- 1 Key Stage 2 classroom
- 2 Key Stage 2 hub
- 3 Breakout/calm rooms
- 4 Staff offices
- 5 Double height void
- 6 Key Stage 3 classroom
- 7 Key Stage 3 hub
- 8 Key Stage 4 classroom
- 9 Key Stage 4 hub
- 10 Staff break area

On the first floor of my proposal, are all of the Key Stages, with four classrooms apiece. Each Key Stage is broken off from the main corridor by a shorter corridor that offshoots into a small 'hub'. Here there are toilets, an individual breakout/calm room, and the classrooms themselves. There is also another offshoot which has four staff offices, that can either be allocated or shared by various teachers and other staff. All storage is inside each classroom, giving staff direct access to everything they need. There is also a large staff area, where they can sit and eat, relax, or work together.

On this floor, the roof has been raised and is made of glass, to allow light to reach the rooms below. Since their classrooms are where the students spend most of their time, I wanted to bring as much light in as possible. The roof, supported by steel frames, will allow all overhead daylight to hit the interior of the buildings. The ceilings of the first floor have skylight cut outs, opening up the rooms to the roof and natural daylight above, and creating moving boxes of sun in each.



# BALCONY

The library is an essential space within any school. It acts as a place for research, and recreational reading, as well as being somewhere for people to get together and share ideas. The existing library at Holgate is small, with one large table in the centre and a few bookshelves around the sides. There are no cosy spaces for individual reading, or anywhere for students to go and spend time with their friends. It is indistinguishable from any other room as you walk down the central corridor and is primarily used for group sessions rather than being an open and calm space.

In my design I have moved the library to be an area, rather than a room, at the far end of the building. It has two areas within the main space, as well as 2 adjoining sensory rooms, and 1 large meeting/group room. The central area is just bookshelves, with beanbags scattered for individuals, and to the side there is a connected room that is separated with a ¾ length wall, that has sofas and tables for groups to sit in company. The meeting room has one large table, much like there is currently, and the space will facilitate lessons, meetings, and clubs. I wanted the space to be pleasant for both staff and students alike.



# LIBRARY

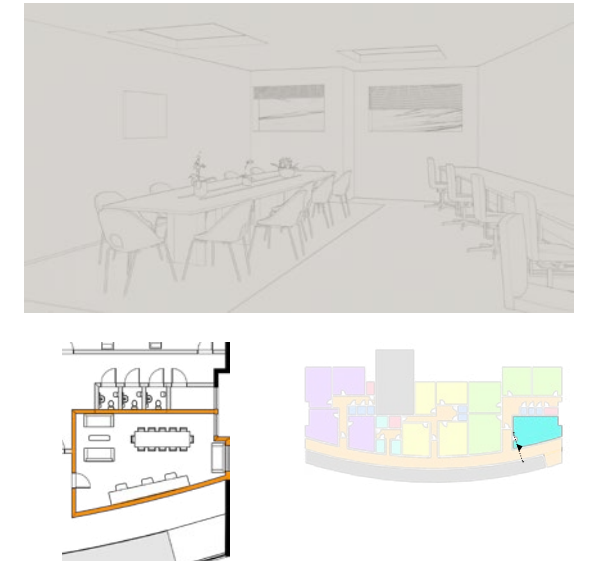




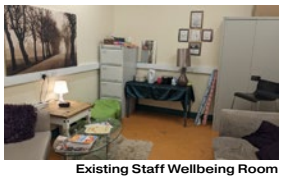
# CANTEEN



# STAFF ROOM



Staff at Holgate Meadows have very important responsibilities to both each other and the children. The teachers are crucial in supporting the students, and all other staff facilitate the positive learning environment. The staff deserve a comfortable and enjoyable space to relax and step away from students, so I have included several large staff areas, including a large staff room (pictured) on the first floor. In this room, there are sofas, a large dining table, and a row of desks along the North wall. By including this variety of furniture, I can ensure that this room will appropriately accommodate any staff who use it. There are also blinds on the window, so that the visibility in from outside can be eliminated, and adults can get some much-needed privacy, should there be children outside.



Existing Staff Wellbeing Room



# SPORTS HALL

I have visualised here a possible layout for a Key Stage 2 classroom. The learning spaces are the most flexible areas in my proposal, as different students learn in different ways, and teachers also have their own preferences. By showing a possibility, I can illustrate my aesthetic for these spaces, as well as some key aspects.

The walls and surfaces are in a range of timber finishes that adds is simple and clean, yet still warm and comforting. All of the classrooms have skylights, allowing in daylight throughout the entire day, as well as high windows. The windows are above the students seated eyeline, so that there can be no distractions of seeing other people outside, however, they can still benefit from the light that comes in, as well as seeing the trees and the sky. The inbuilt storage in the classrooms will have doors, to make organisation easier as well as avoid unwanted distractions. This has been inspired by Montessori classrooms where organisation is key, making locating items easy and splitting up resources into activities. Another Montessori feature is simplicity. There are no messy displays on the walls that encourage waste and add work for the staff, however, students work may be displayed, as well as clear artwork and images that can help the room feel more comfortable and that can be educational. This eliminates any clutter that may be off-putting to the students.



# CLASSROOM