## Successful school design

Effective graphic approaches





## Introduction

An essential part of any review by CABE's schools design panel is their visual presentation by design teams. To help teams find the best way to present proposals on the eight A1 sheets that the panel requires, CABE commissioned four architects to develop example drawings to illustrate different graphic approaches to communicating school designs.

Each set of drawings explains the proposed design and conveys how it conforms to the 10 criteria that CABE's panel uses to assess schemes. These graphic approaches are not meant to prescribe a fixed template or graphic style, but rather to demonstrate the scope and content of information required to illustrate different schemes, so that they can be easily understood and effectively reviewed.

The schools design panel looks for straightforward and succinct graphic presentations in which design strategies are clearly defined and translated into a cohesive proposal. Diagrams are extremely useful to convey strategic thinking across the project. Together with coherent architectural drawings, the presentation should deliver a comprehensive picture of the school design.

The 10 CABE criteria should be seen as a framework for the assessment of school designs rather than a method of structuring the presentations. Further detail on the presentation requirements and working through the assessment criteria can be found in the other two publications that accompany this one in CABE's Successful school design series: How CABE's schools design panel works and Questions to ask.

The four example presentations represent anonymous designs for Building Schools for the Future schools. They include a range of sites and projects, each with its own aspirations and challenges. Their locations vary and include a new build/refurbishment in an urban conservation area; a new build in a rural conservation area that co-locates a mainstream school and a special needs unit; a new build/refurbishment in a constrained urban site; and a new build in a rural village.

The presentations represent the level of material submitted at the final bid submission of the schools design panel process. Initial bid submissions may not be as polished, but presentations should continue to cover the strategies and design proposal. The panel needs to understand the strategies that are translated into the design.

Photographs of presentation models displayed at the review alongside the eight A1 drawings are also shown here. Models are not specifically required or submitted in all cases, but they can be a useful tool for supporting drawings and presenting the scheme three-dimensionally. Models are particularly useful when they illustrate the immediate context, the character of the site, including its topography, the proposed massing and building arrangement, and school grounds provision. Clear sketch models are welcome.

Presentation 1: new build/ refurbishment in urban conservation area

This proposal aims to provide 21st-century teaching and learning spaces through an educational model that organises the school into departments. It is mix of refurbishment and new build to an existing 1930s school in an urban conservation area. Existing accommodation will be rationalised to create a welcoming entrance, improve the location of departments such as science, enable accessibility and circulation in and around the school, and provide inspiring social spaces.

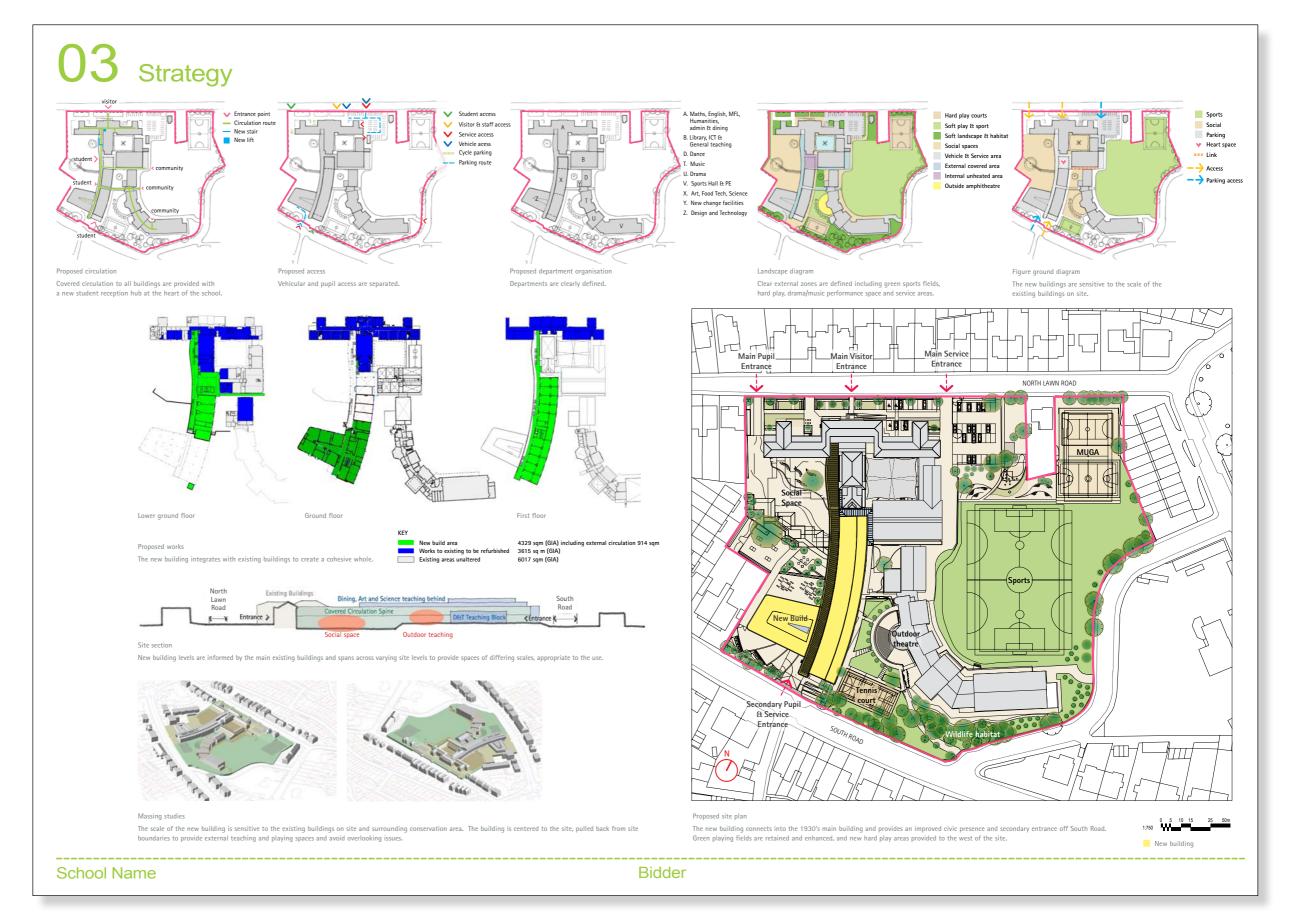
The design is informed by the need to replace a number of buildings that have come to the end of their lives, physically and educationally, with state-of-the-art facilities that allow innovative teaching techniques, for example, wet and dry science areas. Pupil and vehicle access to the school are combined; pupil circulation is not clear and did not meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements. The design seeks to simplify student movement and use the limited outdoor spaces to their full potential, providing a range of external teaching and social facilities, such as a first floor roof deck as an outdoor teaching space. The local community will continue to use sports, drama and hall areas, and may also use the new social hub adjacent to the dining area.



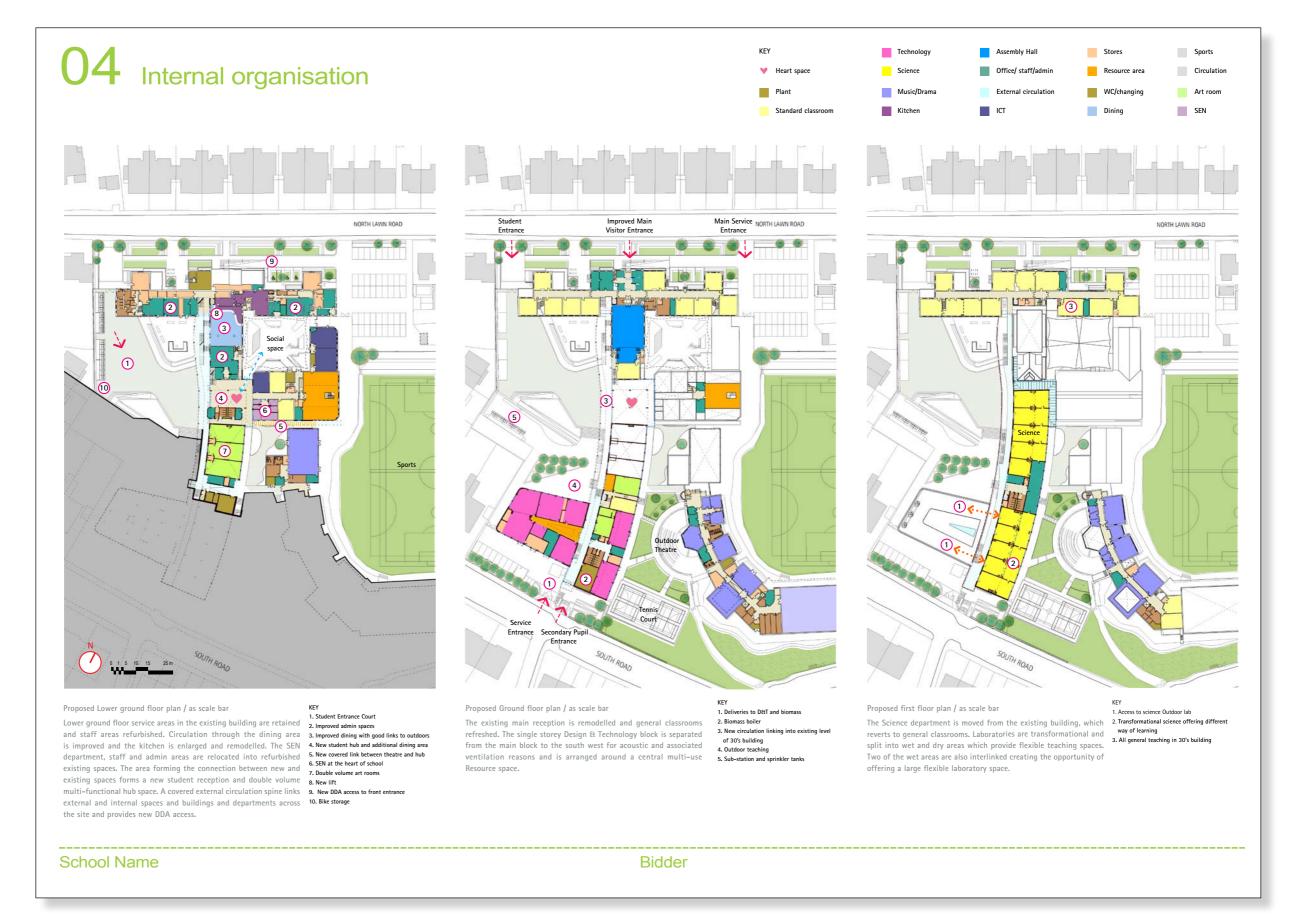
This drawing sets out the basis for the project by defining the key education objectives, an analysis of the site and its buildings, the school's relationship with its surroundings, and environmental characteristics across the site, such as prevailing wind direction and sun paths.



Photographs and drawings set out the demolition strategy based on an appraisal of existing accommodation.

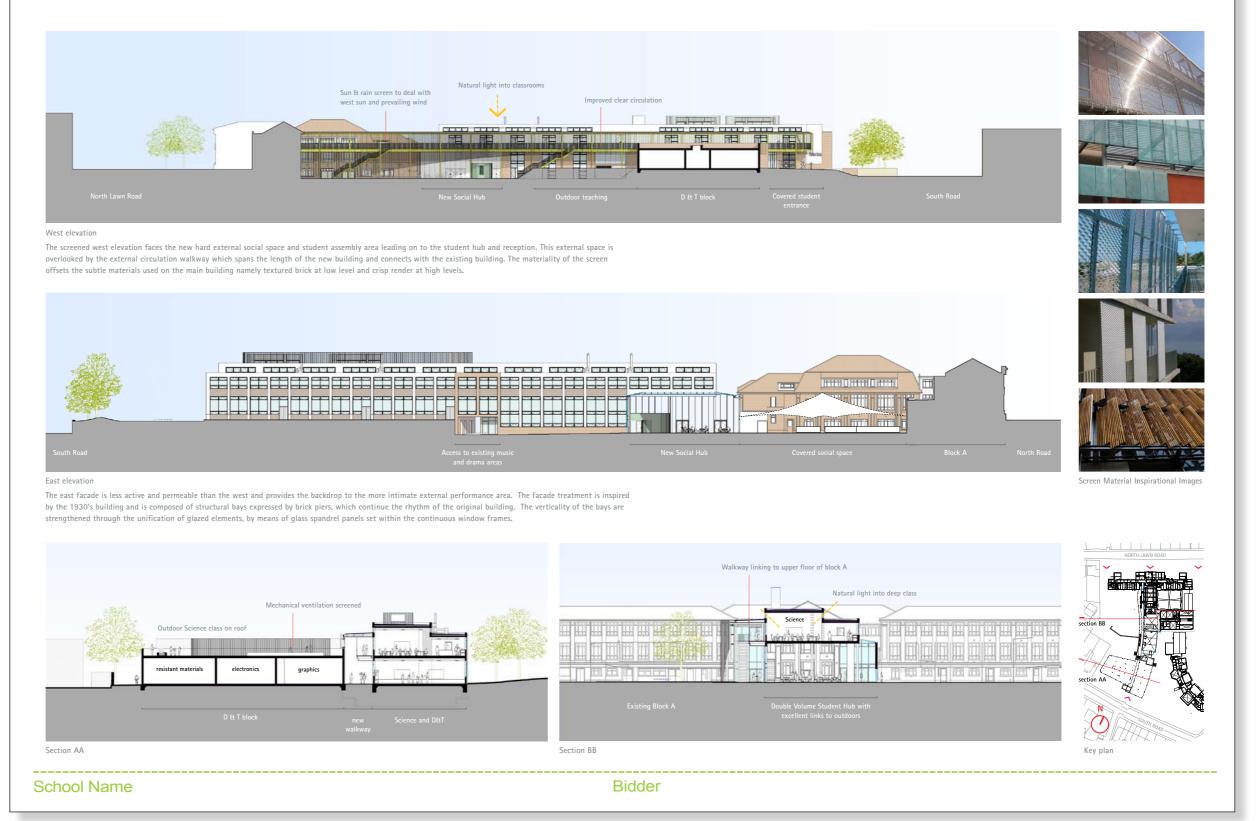


Design strategies are explained through key diagrams, including the scope of works, massing studies, access routes, and figure ground diagrams. The site plan integrates these aspects into a clear, cohesive proposal.



These plans illustrate the principles of internal organisation and distribution of accommodation at different levels.

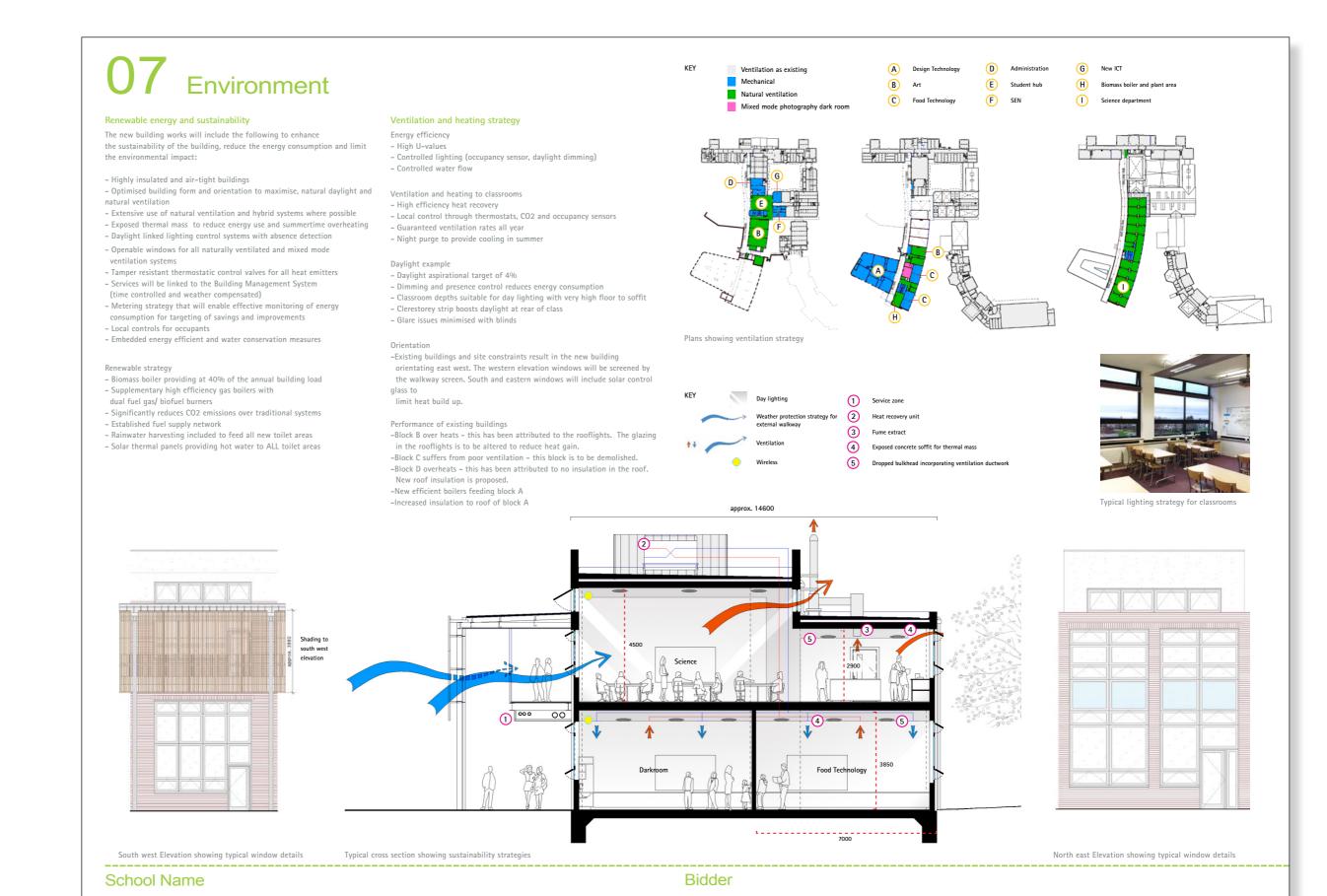
## 05 Elevations and sections



Key sections and elevations show facade treatments at different orientations.



The proposal for school grounds is supported by sectional studies which describe the quality of external spaces and how they relate to the school's immediate surroundings.



The environmental strategy is presented at various scales. The different bay elevations indicate how the visual appearance is influenced by the building's orientation and environmental strategy. The section illustrates how internal comfort conditions are achieved. Key dimensions and graphic scales are extremely useful for the purposes of review.



Coloured sketches demonstrate a lively school environment – both inside and out. Sketches are extremely useful, and it is important that all material accurately represents the scale of the spaces.

Presentation 2: new build in rural conservation site

This new-build school in a rural setting had its own set of challenges. Its location in a strategic view on an important nature conservation site had a fundamental impact on the design. The site itself is an existing primary care trust campus due for demolition. The mainstream school and autistic spectrum disorder unit are co-located on the site, allowing independent and shared uses of internal and external spaces.

Key objectives were to create adaptable room configurations, respond to the 'schools within a school' vision but with a single school ethos, and provide flexible spaces for team teaching. The surrounding landscape is used as an important learning resource. The local community will be able to use sports facilities out of school hours and the location of the library is designed to encourage use both within and outside the normal school day.



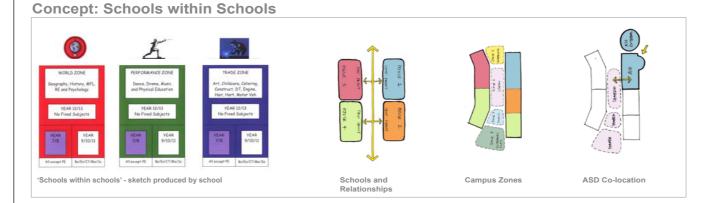


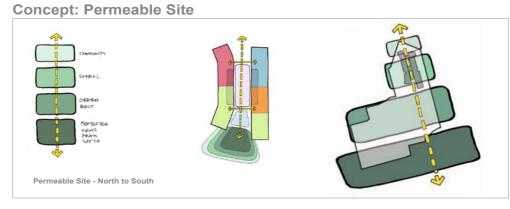


# **Site Context Proposed Site Existing Site** Site Analysis **School in a Rural Setting** Consortium

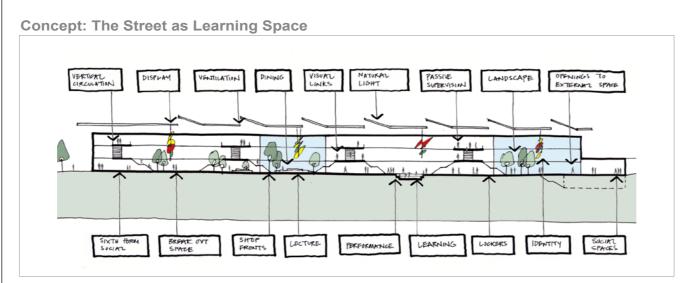
Site planning is analysed in relation to location, height, site topography and planning constraints. Pedestrian routes for students, staff, parents, and the wider community, as well as vehicular access for public transport and minibuses is shown. Public rights of way are also indicated on the site plan.













This drawing demonstrates how the learning model and school ethos have been translated into an education environment. The vision has been defined in terms of curriculum delivery, the

relationship of internal and external spaces, and co-location.

**School in a Rural Setting** 

Consortium

## 03 Plans **Ground floor** First floor Second floor School in a Rural Setting Consortium

This drawing details the organisation of the 'school within a school' model and allocation of both internal and external spaces for delivering the curriculum.



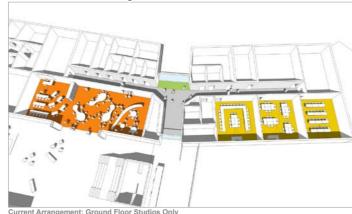
These diagrams explain how the buildings have been organised to respond to pastoral learning, community zoning, circulation, and ICT delivery. Elevations show how the massing and material treatments respond to internal functions and different orientations.

## 05 Long Life/ Loose Fit

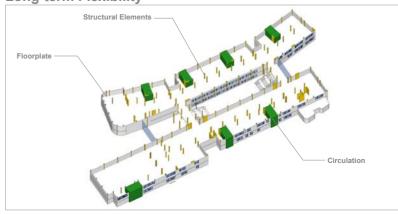
# **Short-term Flexibility**

## **Mid-term Flexibility**

Potential for Studios on Upper Floors



Long-term Flexibility



Due to planning and site constraints a significant future extension to the school will not be possible in this location. However flexible floorplates and minimal structural elements allow for maximum future adaptability of the building.

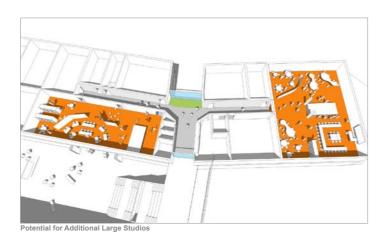


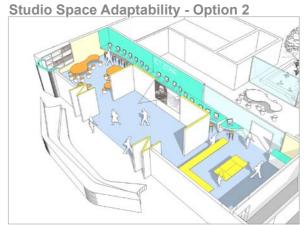












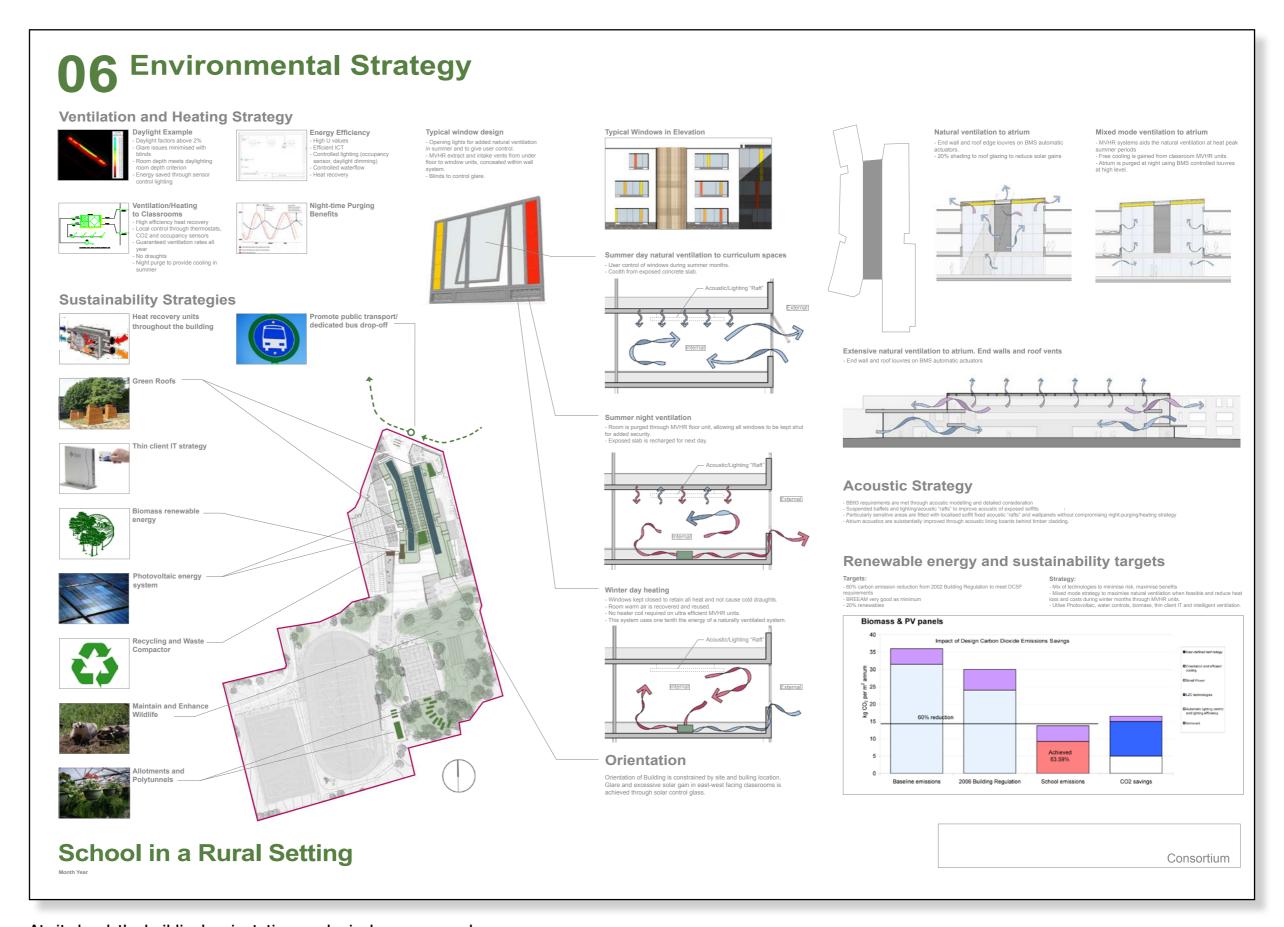




## **School in a Rural Setting**

Consortium

The definition of 'flexibility' can vary from school to school. In the brief for this school, it is understood in terms of time. Structural solutions for different options over time are shown. Expansion is not a possibility given planning constraints, and this is clearly noted.

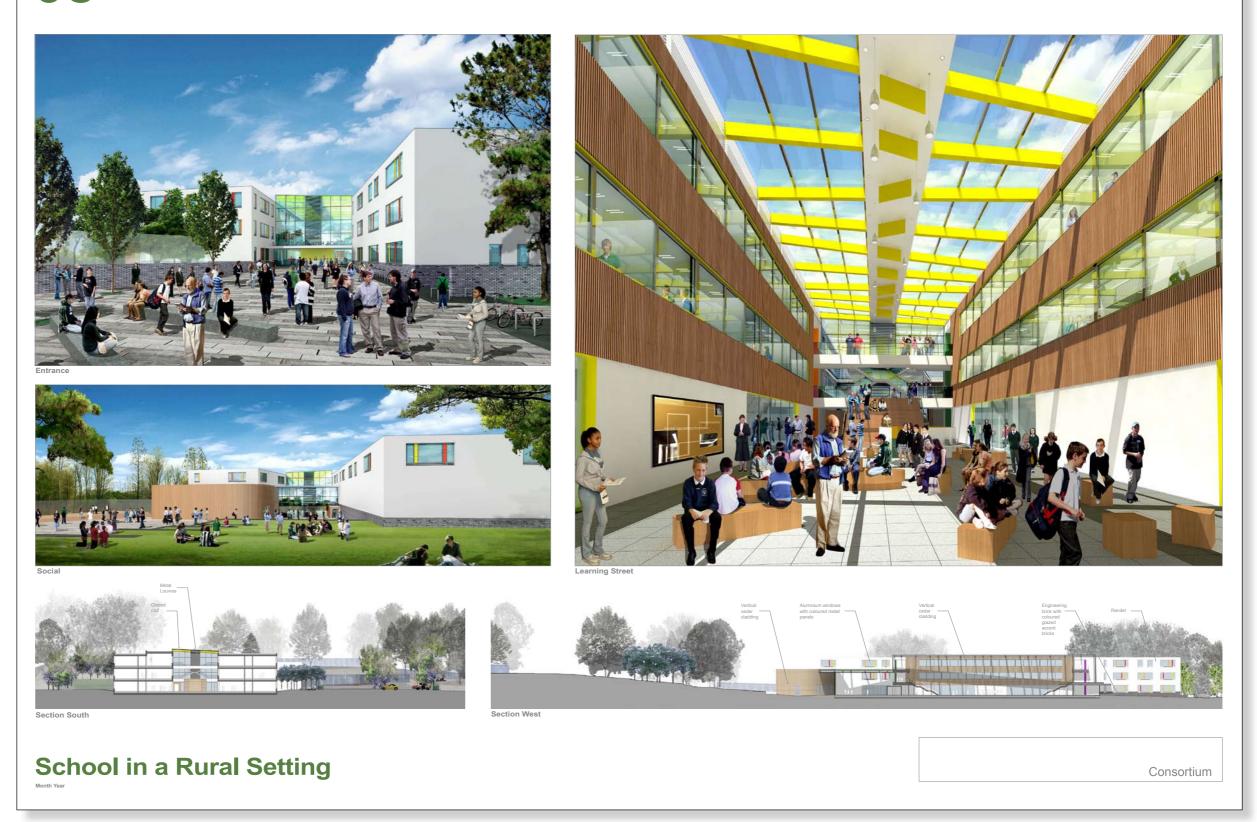


At site level, the building's orientation, ecological response and access to green transport inform the sustainability strategy. At building level, it is met through ventilation and heating strategies (illustrated for both summer and winter), which are demonstrated in more detail in the fenestration design. Daylighting acoustics, and ICT strategies are also addressed.



A range of practical places for learning, socialising and exercising are shown. The fencing strategy has been well integrated with the building and landscape to define the use of the external spaces by students in the mainstream school, autistic spectrum disorder unit and local community. The strategy balances school security with the regard for the natural landscape, topography and openness of the site.

## 08 Identity and Context



External and internal visualisations show the whole school experience – from entrance to informal play - and the quality of materials used. The interior visualisation indicates the function and atmosphere as well as the details of ventilation, light and acoustics within the main 'street'.

Presentation 3: new build/ refurbishment in constrained urban site

This scheme proposes a mix of refurbishment and new-build accommodation on an urban site near a railway. Because of site constraints, sports provision will be delivered off-site. The school aims to provide for students with severe learning difficulties and provide purpose-built accommodation. The proposal reinforces the school's specialisms, provides base areas for years 7 and 8 and improves existing sports facilities. The location of the building was important to minimising disruption and maintaining educational standards during construction.

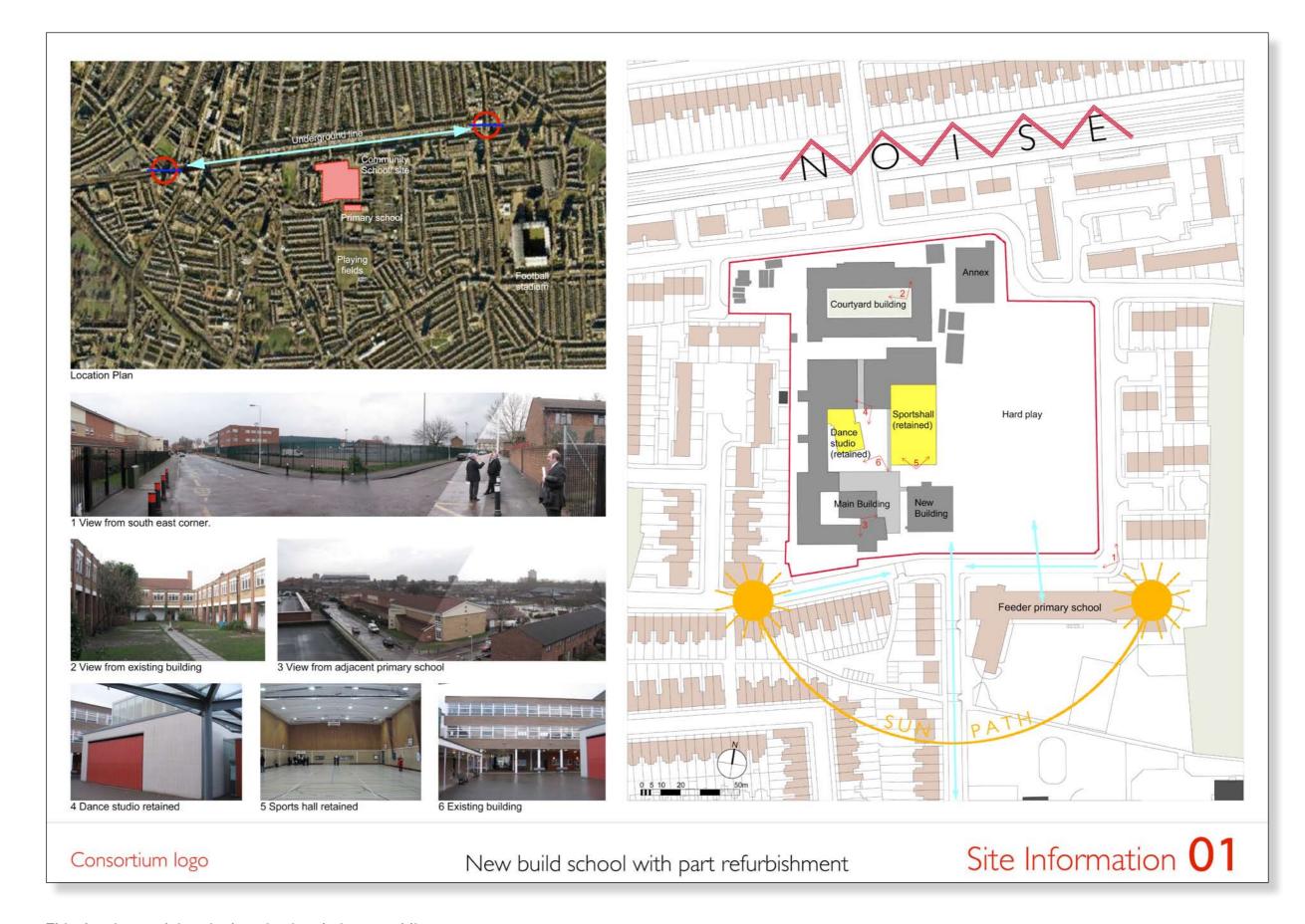
The design of the new school is central to the social and economic regeneration of the local neighbourhood. The new school will be a full-service, extended school open to the wider community, and its position next to the primary school will maintain a successful existing partnership. Care has been taken to create a welcoming entrance and facilities to encourage community use. Areas such as performing arts and learning resource centre are located and designed to encourage parent use and adult learning use throughout the school day.



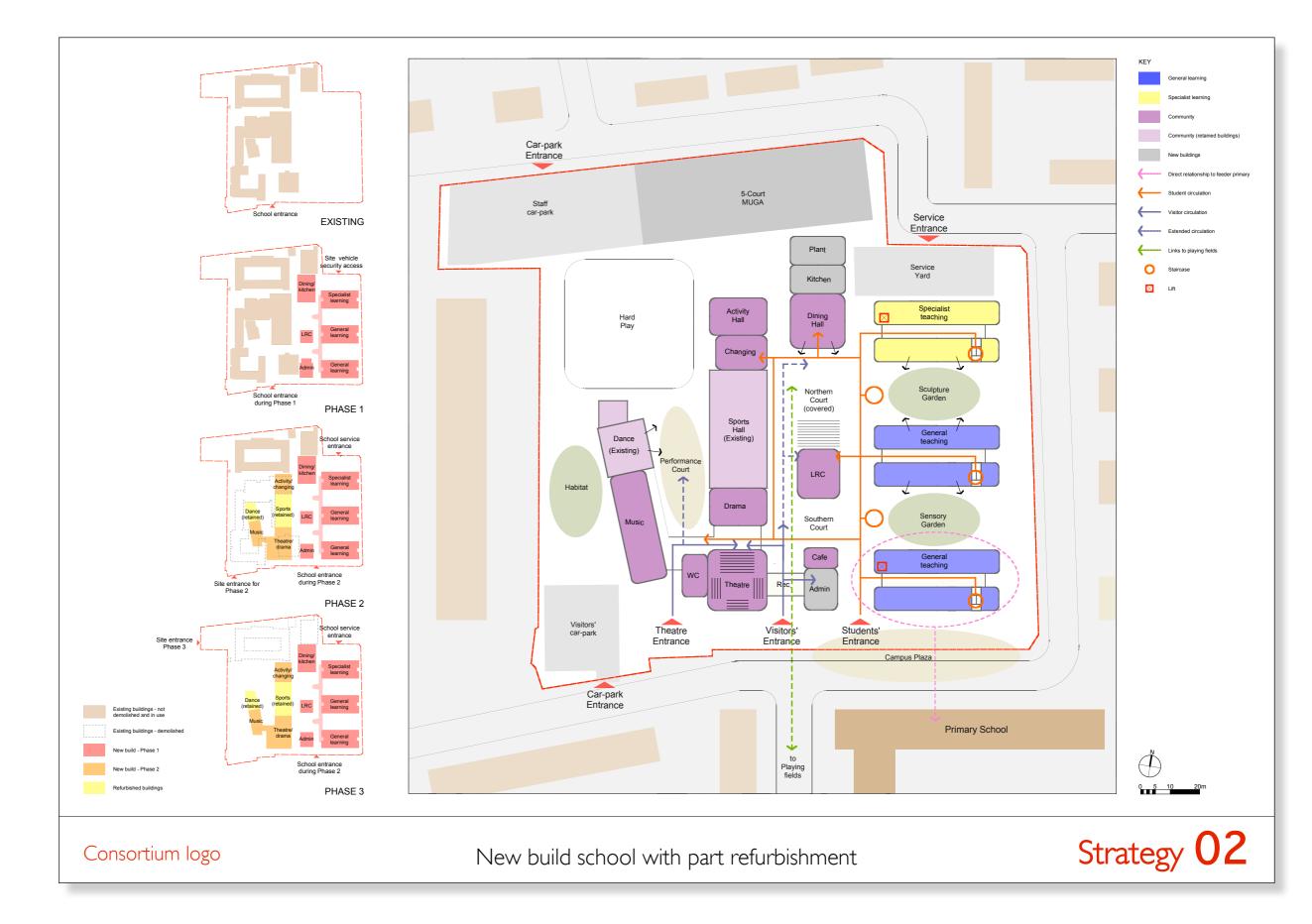








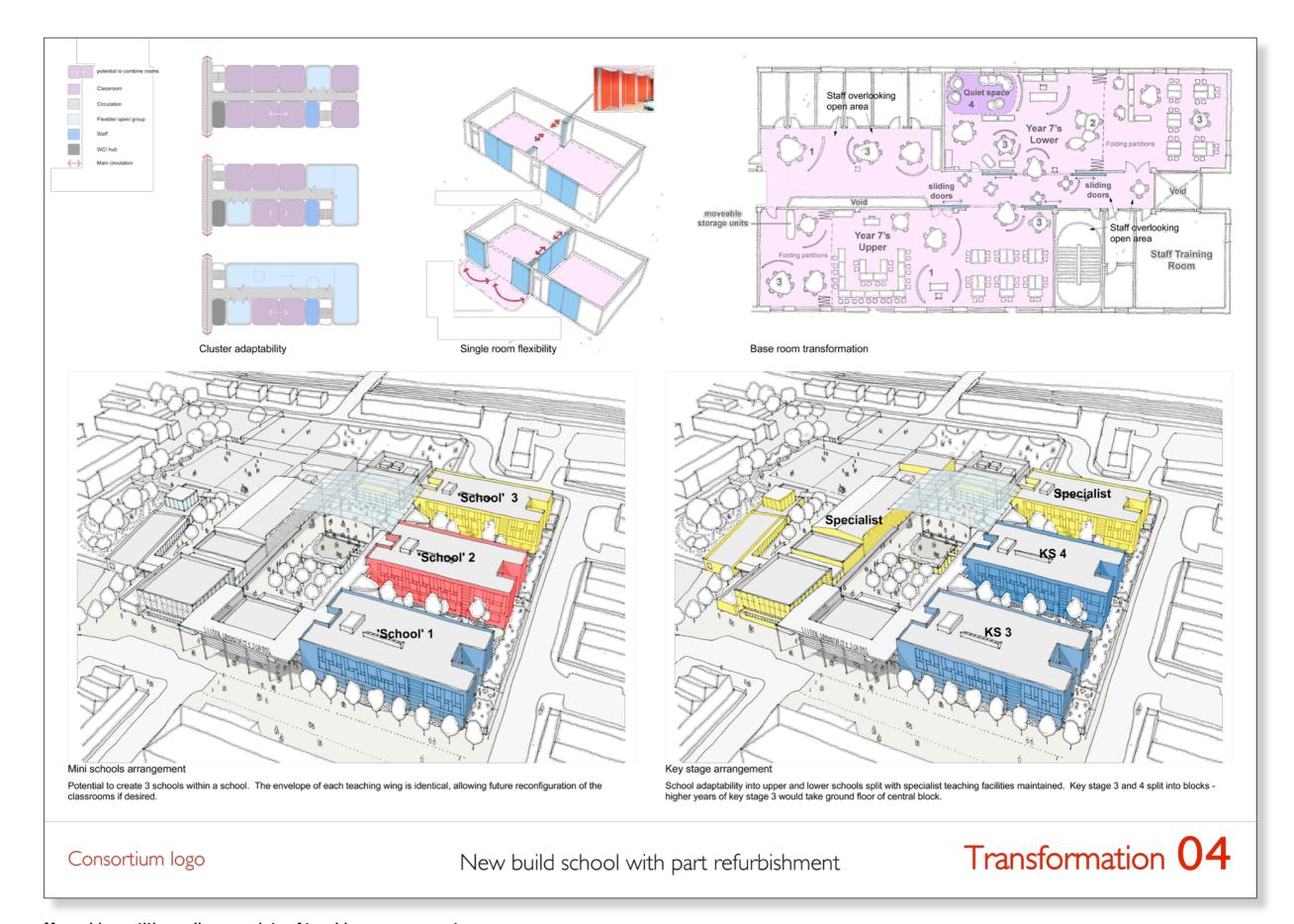
This drawing explains site location in relation to public transport, off-site playing fields, and other educational and community facilities. The analysis indicates accommodation that can be retained and environmental characteristics of the site in terms of noise and sun paths.



The design strategy is explained through the construction phasing, which impacts site planning and the school organisation.



This site plan identifies the main entrances to the school. The plans relate the interior planning to the adjoining external spaces. The sketch vignettes show external spaces that can be used for exercise, learning, and socialising.



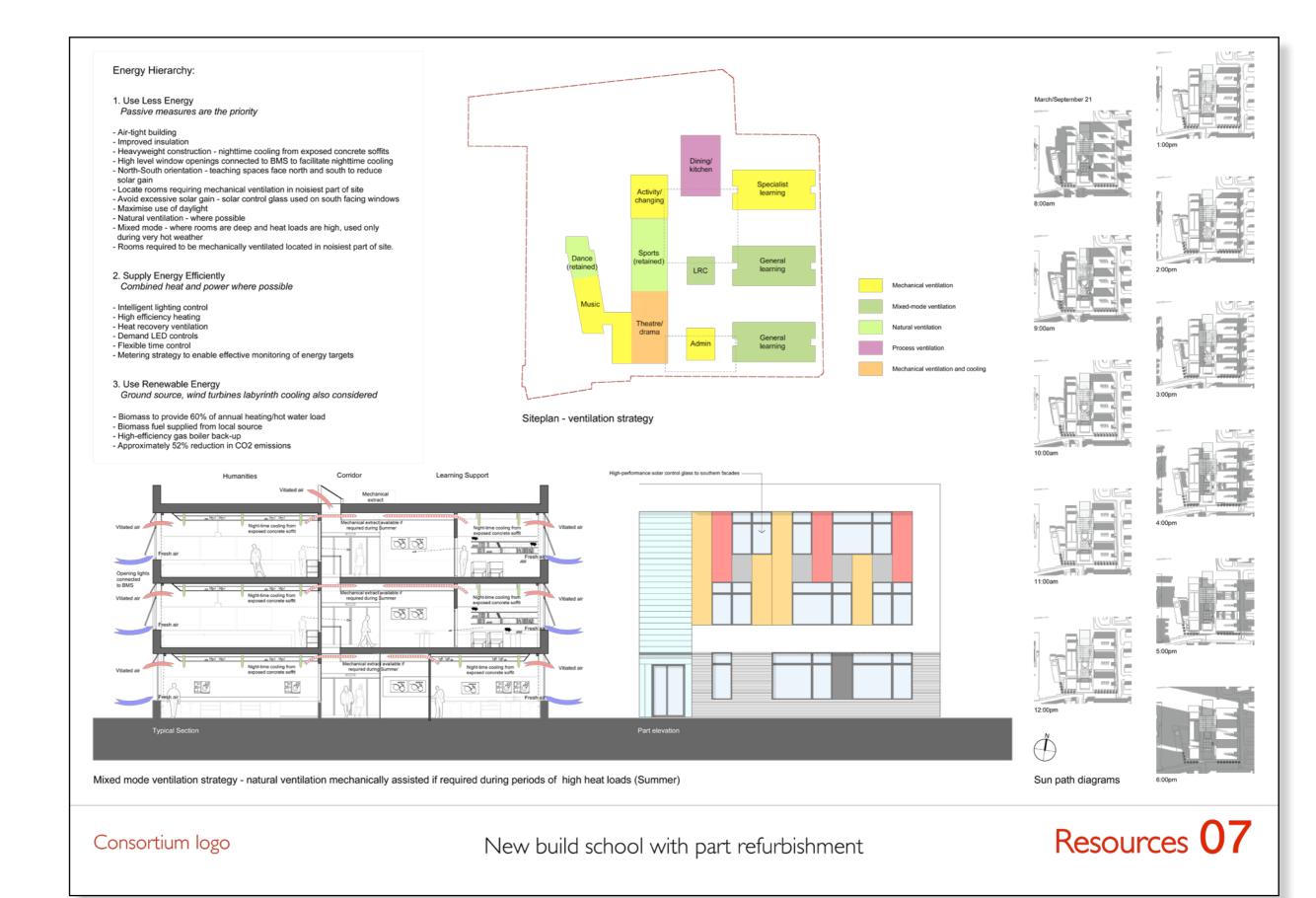
Moveable partitions allow a variety of teaching arrangements and the modules of the building wings are designed for future adaptability. On a larger scale, the whole building is designed to deliver both key stage curriculum and 'school within a school' educational models.



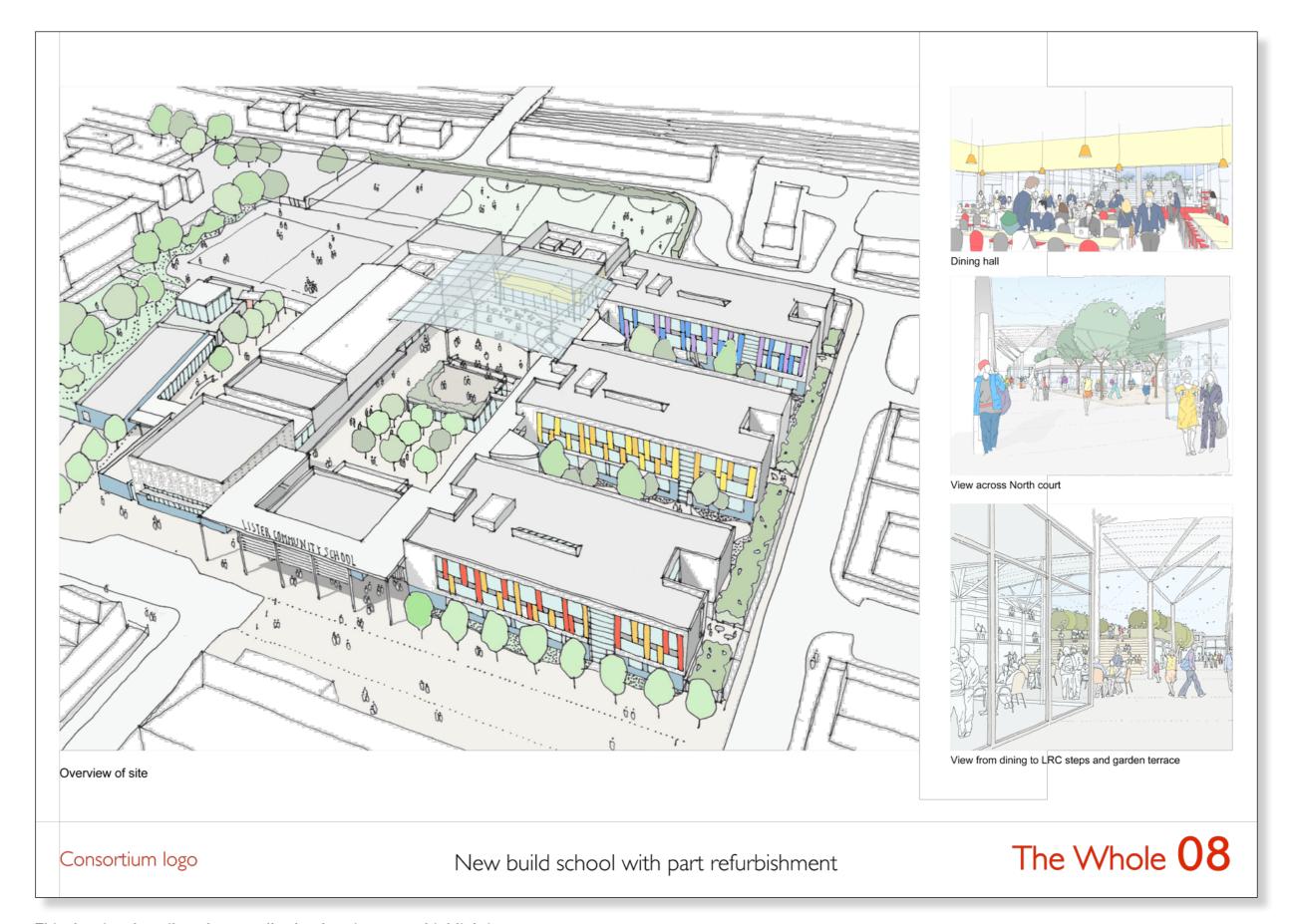
The elevations indicate visual appearance, including signage and graphics, and relate the massing of the building to neighbouring residences.



Long section drawings articulate the range of internal spaces, and the continuity between the internal and external school environment. Detailed coloured sketches support the sections and illustrate the atmosphere, as well as ICT usage, furniture, acoustics and lighting, of the internal spaces.



This detailed technical section explains how the building will deliver a comfortable learning environment given the site acoustics. Sufficient thermal mass and floor-to-ceiling heights will enable natural ventilation as part of a mixed-mode strategy. The fenestration height and design will facilitate daylighting.



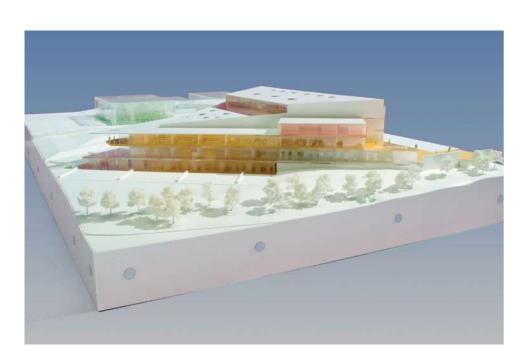
This drawing describes the overall school environment, highlighting key spaces such as dining and the learning resource centre as well as informal external spaces, including the covered courtyard.

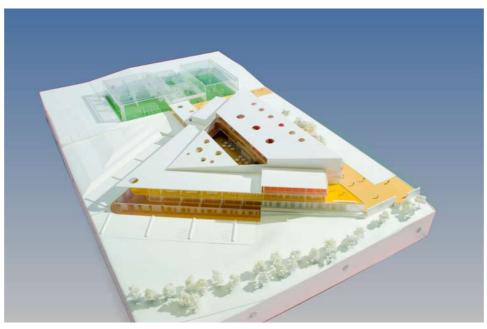
## Presentation 4: new build in rural village

This school is located in a rural village. The new-build school will replace existing poor-quality building stock on the same site. Phasing and location of the new build are therefore central to enabling occupation of the site during construction.

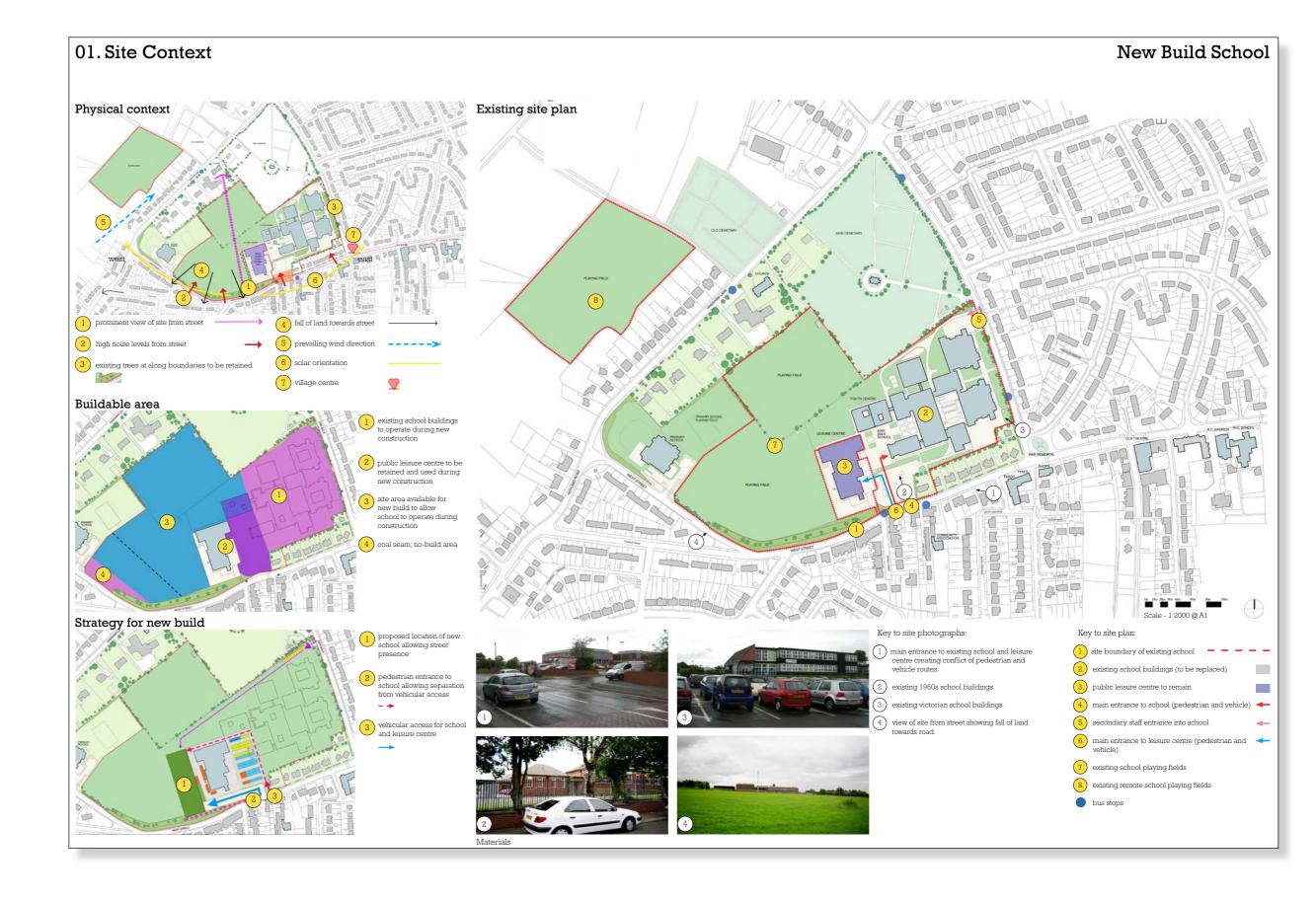
The education vision aspires to a learning environment that raises expectations of all learners, including within the wider local community, and can adapt to changing approaches to teaching and the curriculum as well as ICT. Key objectives were to create a welcoming, stimulating and sustainable environment with a strong school identity, and support a school specialism of technology.

The school will provide full service provision through co-location of support services to pupils and their families. The school will also incorporate an adult learning centre for use by the community during the school day. A new youth centre will be integrated into the new school but also accessible from its own entrance.









These drawings describe the development constraints and opportunities through existing context, site and building analysis.



The proposed site plan shows pedestrian and vehicular access as well as the arrangement of buildings and external amenities. Carparking and service routes are also shown.

#### 03. Educational Vision New Build School

## Learning Zones

The school educational strategy is divided into faculties called learning zones. The school specialism is Design Technology and Vocational Studies.







Learning Bases Faculty Resource Base External terraces Internal break-out

#### - Learning Bases Faculty Resource Base - External terraces - Internal break-out spaces

#### Identity of learning zones

It has been important for the school that each Learning Zone expresses it's individual identity but is strongly connected by social spaces.











#### Spatial relationships

The Learning Zones are located both horizontally and vertically by the central atrium space and the street. Each zone has a close link to these primary spaces but is also located to maximise connections with the external context as appropriate to the individual learning zone programmes.

Each Learning Zone incorporates specific teaching facilities. All Learning Zones have a central a central "social space" and a series of break out spaces.



- located at lower and upper ground levels to provide prominent position.
- allows access to external areas for large scale construction activities.



- located adjacent to the main entrance and reception.
- central location to encourage communal school and community use



- for the sports facilities.
- location allows access to the external sports amenities and social/habitat landscapes.



- located at first floor and wraps around the located on 2nd and 3rd floors. atrium space allowing close connectivity.
  - incorporates flexible classrooms and labs with breakout spaces and external teaching

## Transformational/ Adaptable spaces

The ability to transform and adapt the learning environment is key to the educational vi-

The layout and structure of the building allows adaptability for use, including zoned access to the school to enable community and extended learning.

The building, structure and servicing allows transformational spaces which can change over time as teaching pedagogy develops.



#### The Street:

This links the entire school at general level from the main entrance.



This links the triangular building horizontally. It forms a dynamic heart to the school which encourages social



Connecting entrances through Link



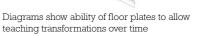
incorporates variety of break out space,

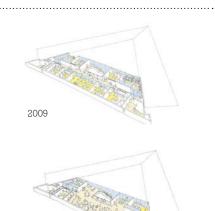
decks.

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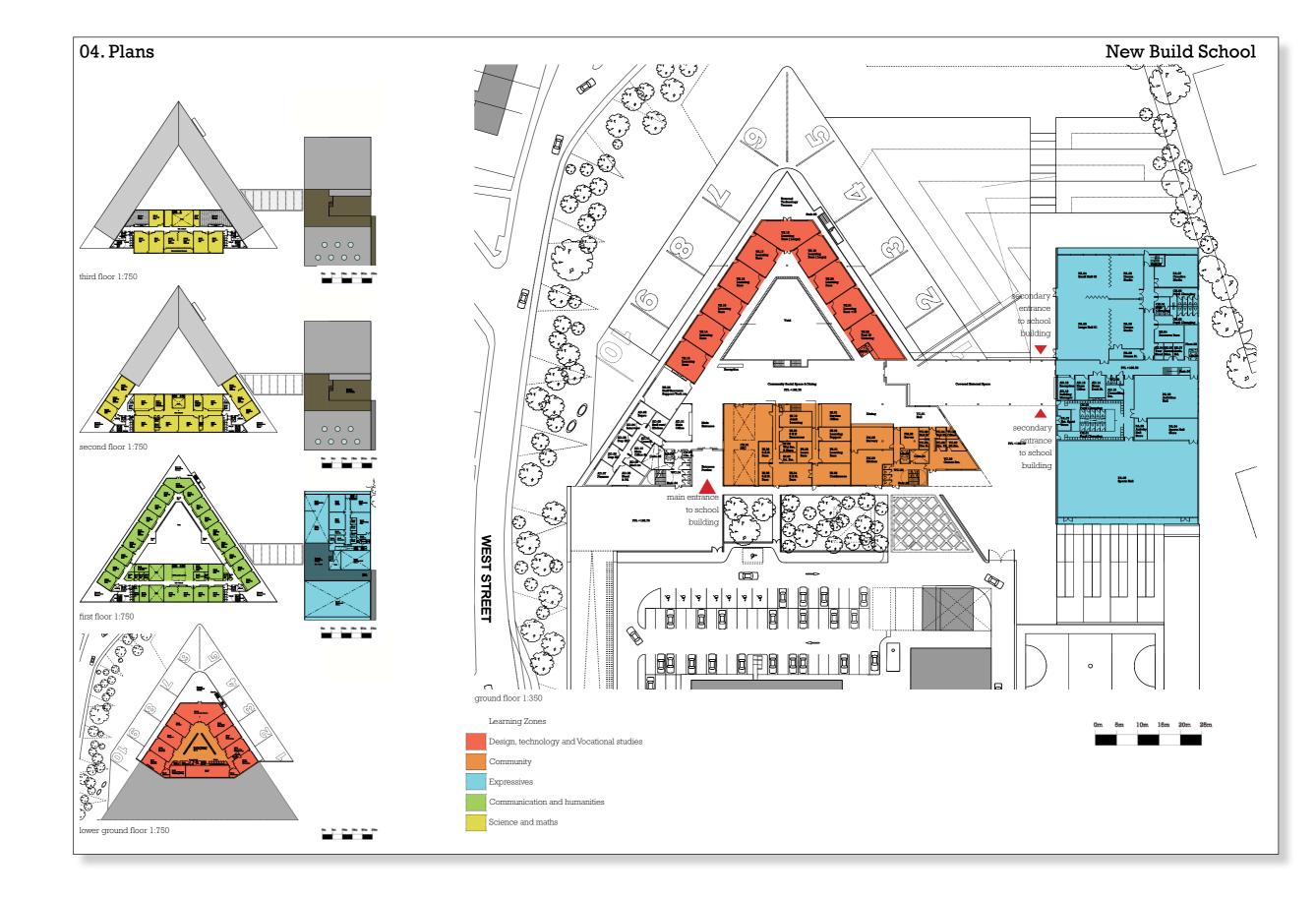
flexible classrooms and external teaching



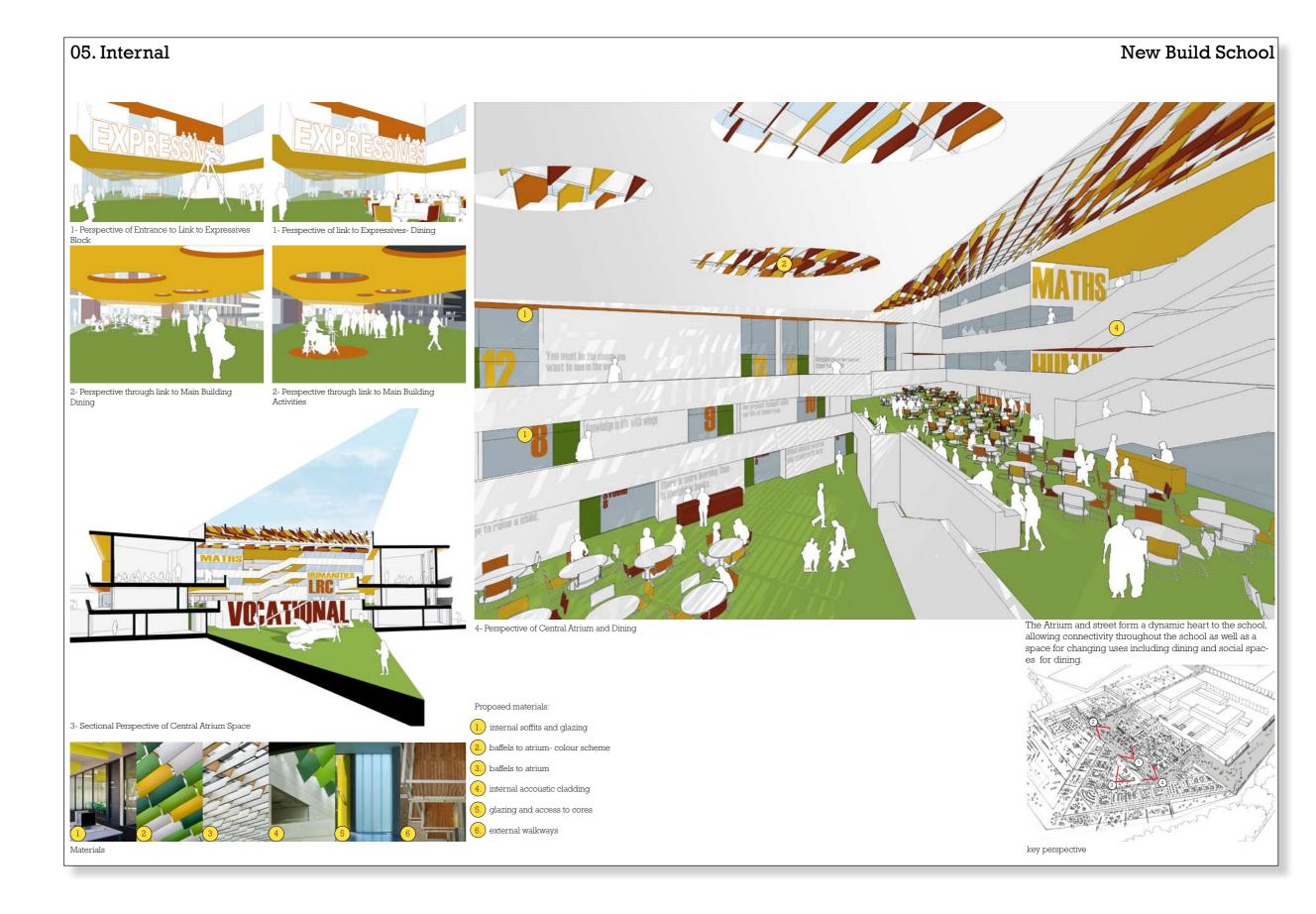




The educational vision highlights the key learning components in terms of identity, space, adjacencies, access, and future adaptability. Diagrams are always useful to highlight key points.



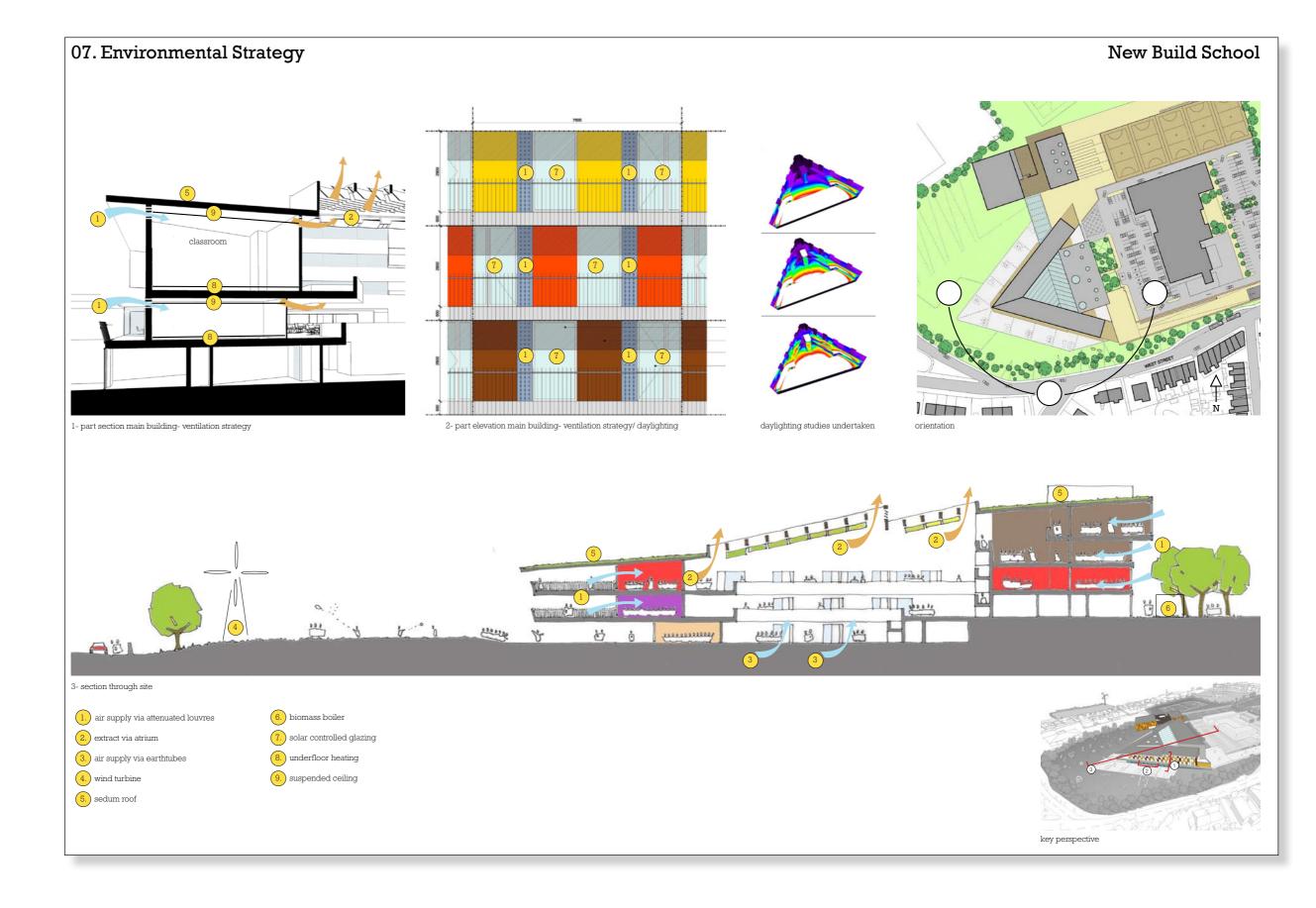
The plans explain the organisation of the buildings, and main points of access.



Interior drawings show how the atrium will be articulated. The material finish is annotated to demonstrate how this space will be functional, feel comfortable and versatile. Graphics are introduced to create a vibrant atmosphere and promote way-finding throughout the school.



The elevations show how the fenestration has been treated at different orientations to deliver a low-energy school building.



The environmental strategy is considered both at the level of the whole site and also in the building detail. The drawings illustrate the strategy for delivering a comfortable school environment, including ventilation, acoustics, and daylighting, that relates to its site.



The landscape proposal considers school grounds on several scales. The overall organisation across two plots of land provides a variety of spaces for exercise, dining, socialising and learning. Potential future community facilities are also indicated. The inset drawings show the relationship between classrooms and adjacent external spaces. Vignettes show potential activities in the school grounds.

Successful school design: effective graphic approaches has been produced to help the bidders and designers whose BSF school projects are being reviewed by CABE, to prepare their visual presentation. It features effective graphic examples of the eight sheets required for review by the panel. Each graphic shows how the proposals relate to the 10 assessment criteria. The document is part of a suite of publishing by CABE called Successful school design, downloadable from www.cabe.org.uk/design-review/schools.

CABE
1 Kemble Street
London WC2B 4AN
T 020 7070 6700
F 020 7070 6777
E enquiries@cabe.org.uk
www.cabe.org.uk

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