

A\_ **APPENDIX**\_CONSULTATION REPORT

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# DARA SCHOOL MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION REPORT

AUGUST 2020

# Introduction

## Contents

1.0 Consultation Process

2.0 Student Consultation

3.0 Staff Consultation

4.0 School Board Consultation

5.0 Parents Consultation (by Dara School)

Thank you to all of the students, staff and board members who took part in the consultation sessions. Their first-hand knowledge and input will be integral in the creation of the master plan to guide the development of Dara School into the future.

Grieve Gillett Andersen (GGA) has been engaged by Dara School to prepare a master plan to assess existing facilities and help guide future development on the site. GGA takes a collaborative approach to master planning and encourages the inclusion of the school community, as effective and meaningful engagement is crucial to the project's success.

Consultation during the masterplan process enables the collection of first-hand practical knowledge about how the existing school works. It allows the design team to hear about the goals and aspirations of users and stakeholders, and the experiences and infrastructure the school would like in the future. The consultation approach strives to be genuine and meaningful, with an intent to consider all information received. This will help the master plan to provide a meaningful framework for development that is specifically tailored to Dara School.

### What is the Role of this Report?

This report summarises the process and results of the consultation undertaken to gather input regarding the development of Dara School, and will be used to:

- Collate input and highlight emerging themes;
- Refine the project brief to respond to the school's aims for the master plan;
- Guide the development of master plan options that reflect the specific needs and desires of the primary stakeholders;
- Create a set of goals and ideals against which the master plan report can be tested to ensure accuracy and ownership.

# 1.0 Consultation Process

## What Did We Do?

GGA facilitated three consultation sessions which focused on students, staff and board members. Dara School also subsequently consulted directly with parents and families via a survey and an online discussion.

These sessions aimed to generate an understanding of what is special about Dara School, its goals and aspirations, as well as the collection of practical first-hand knowledge of how the school building and grounds currently function and their potential for the future.

## Session 1. Students:

This session invited the whole current school population, and ultimately included the consultation of over 30 students. It included the following:

- Cognitive mapping exercises of the existing school building and grounds (inside/outside). Students identified which areas they liked / didn't like, where they do / do not spend time, and why.
- Inspirational activities (inside/outside), in which students indicated their preference for the types of space, amenity, play or experiences that they would like to see in their school in future.
- Creative activity, in which students could describe in words/pictures their wish-list for the school.

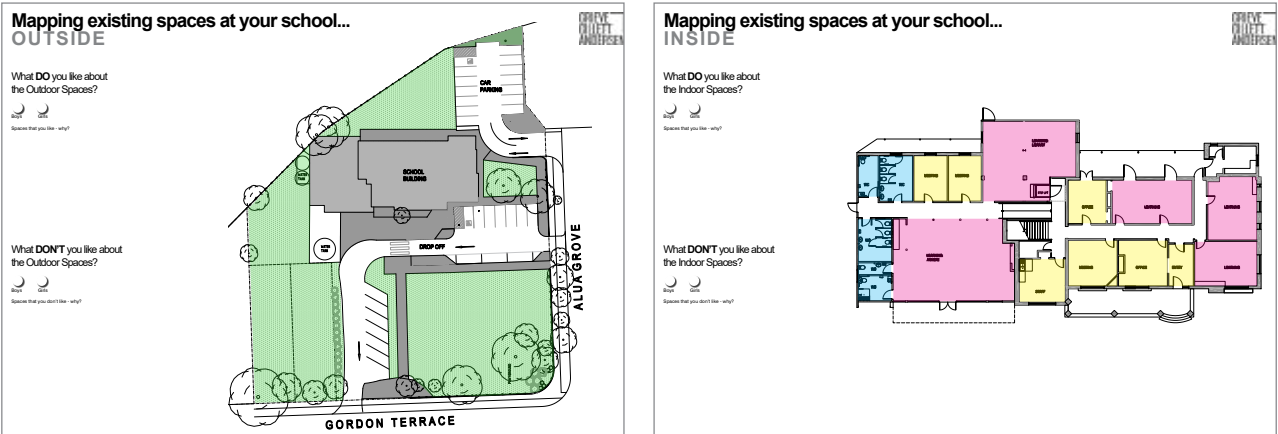


Figure 02: Cognitive Mapping Exercises for Students and Staff - understanding the use of existing spaces

# 1.0 Consultation Process

## Session 2. Staff:

Consultation with staff members occurred at the school, towards the end of a series of internal staff development days, and included around 10 teaching and administrative staff. As well as the activities noted above, the main session with the staff included a discussion of the following:

- What is special about the school, what is different about the teaching approach, and how does this influence the curriculum and the facilities?
- How the existing school is experienced, including a 'day in the life' of a teacher and an administrative staff member.
- What staff would like to see at their school, including input for a 'wish-list' for discussion.

## Session 3. School Board:

This consultation occurred as part of a regular Board meeting, via an online session. Discussion included:

- What does Dara mean to you, and what is the public perception?
- Aspirations for the school in 1, 2, 5 years, long term?
- Main issues, challenges and opportunities for the curriculum and for the facilities.
- Desired outcomes from the masterplan.

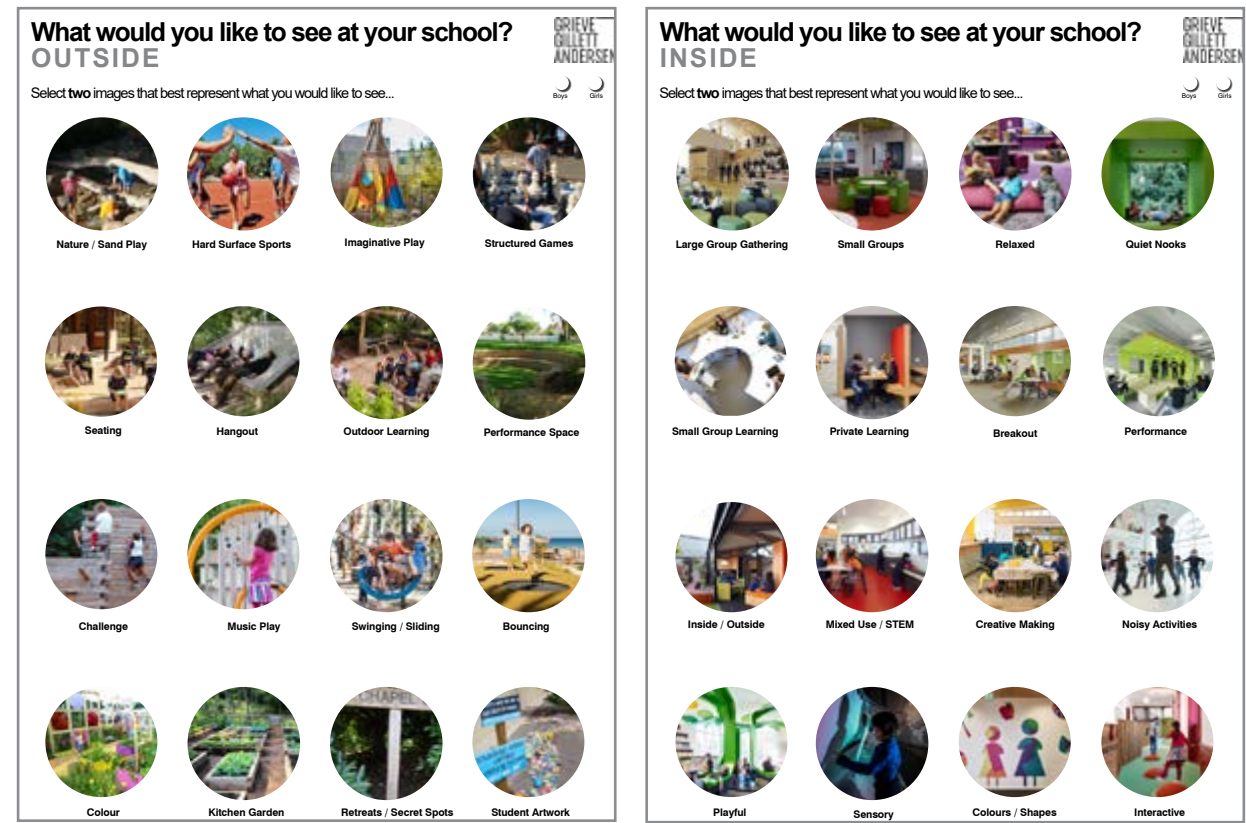


Figure 03: Inspiration Activities for Students and Staff - understanding the types of spaces and facilities that participants want

# 2.0 Student Consultation

## Outside

External spaces have not been completed to the same level as the internal renovation of Cobham Hall. The site has a gate-controlled driveway running in an L-shape through the site, and there are a number of under-developed and leftover spaces which are generally not available to students.

Student recreation is focussed in the large central lawn area, and the school is adding play equipment near the front fence. There are no water or nature play areas. Several mature trees dot the perimeter of the site but there are no shade structures or outdoor seating. There are no formal hard-surface play areas, although the driveway functions as an informal surfaced area when gates are closed to cars.

How do students currently experience the outside spaces?

- The front lawn area was generally well-liked, other than there being 'too many people at the same time playing footy and bumping into each other'.
- The trees generally, and the climbing tree near the front fence in particular, were loved by almost everyone. One negative comment - 'everyone fights about who goes in and then they get stuck in there.'
- Play equipment was liked, as were sandpit, mud, rocks, sticks.
- Many students disliked the bare dirt and muddy areas, but others noted that they love the 'puddles when it rains'.
- Similarly the driveway and car parks caused mixed opinions - many disliked them or said that the school 'could put something better' in those spaces, but others appreciated the hard surfaces for playing on when there were no cars there.
- Water tanks were divisive - many dislike the large tank in particular, but a few noted they were liked.
- The area outside the Annexe was liked by many.
- Empty areas were disliked as 'out-of-bounds areas are wasted', such as the bare dirt areas to the north of the site, to the side and rear of the building.
- The front verandah was disliked as an out-of-bounds space.

What would you like to see at your school?

The top choices made by students are identified below:

- Retreats / Secret Spots
- Swinging / Sliding
- Hangout
- Challenge
- Bouncing
- Nature / Sand Play

As with the inside spaces, outside selections also reflect the desire for more quiet and private spaces with 'Retreats / Secret Spots' rating highly. It also reflects the value placed on relaxed small group spaces and informal seating through the selection of 'Hangout'. These two choices totalled 26 votes.

Reflecting the unfinished nature of the school grounds, play equipment received a lot of support, with 'Swinging / Sliding', 'Bouncing' and 'Nature / Sand Play' very popular options. 'Challenge' and climbing also had significant appreciation (11 votes).

From the Student Drawings:

Seating was not selected by many, but was in fact shown in quite a few of the student drawings. Alongside practical requests for lunch seats and outdoor benches, there were some quite specific requests for an 'outdoor bookshelf with reading seats', a 'reading nook that looks like a tree' and a 'reading hut'.

Kitchen gardens also appeared in a number of student drawings with requests for fruit trees, a 'productive garden with only fun things to eat like berries', and a 'nature room and garden with a kitchen' or opportunities for 'cooking vegetables from the garden'.

There were many drawings of creative play equipment including climbing mountains or volcanoes, forest play areas, giant swings, and slides from the building to the gardens. A number of students liked the idea of playful shapes for everyday objects, such as flower or mushroom shaped chairs and tables or a fox shaped flying fox.





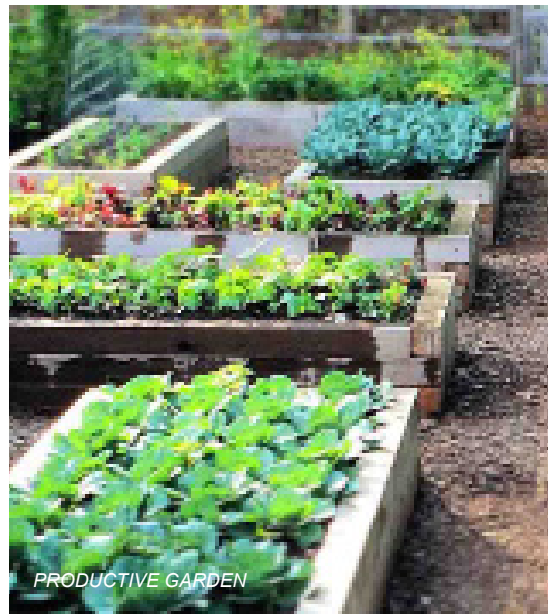
PERFORMANCE SPACE



STUDENT ART INTEGRATION



CLIMBING + CHALLENGE



PRODUCTIVE GARDEN



BOUNCING



HANGOUT

## 2.0 Student Consultation

### Inside

The learning spaces are all housed in Cobham Hall, and include two larger spaces (Library and Annexe) and three smaller group rooms. The larger spaces are well-used, with age-based group learning activities clustered within these spaces. Specific subjects are taken in the classrooms. Spaces have been fitted out with a variety of furniture types including relaxed sofas, cushions and window seats as well as desks and chairs. There are student WCs for girls and boys, as well as accessible cubicles. The upper level is not currently approved for student use due to the lack of a second egress.

How do students currently experience the inside spaces?

- The large spaces (Annexe and Library) were both well-liked and have lots of fun things to do.
- Many noted that the Annexe can be too cold, too noisy and too crowded.
- The two meeting rooms / offices off the Annexe were noted as disliked.
- Andi's room was particularly liked as it is relaxing, cosy, warm, has fun seating and music, and because of the subjects studied.
- Sue's room was liked for the warmth and the furniture (spider chair, beanbags). Dislikes included that it is crowded and there are not many tables.
- The long learning room was generally less liked as it is 'not fun', 'too plain', 'has no interest', 'could use some colour'. One comment noted that 'people do stuff behind your back' in there.
- The link between the Annexe and the undercroft area outside is liked, as is storing bags outside.
- The couch at the lift landing was liked because it is cosy and quiet. Relaxed furniture was also specifically noted as liked in other rooms. (This is reflected in students choices of what they would like to see in their school, where relaxed and private nooks were popular.)
- Areas that were disliked were those inaccessible to students, including the stairs and the upper level, the north exit door, and the front verandah.

What would you like to see at your school?

The top choices made by students are identified below:

- Quiet Nooks
- Interactive
- Inside / Outside Connection
- Relaxed
- Sensory
- Private Learning
- Mixed Use / STEM
- Creative Making

There was overwhelming support for 'Quiet Nooks' and 'Private Learning' spaces - these two choices added up to 26 votes. 'Relaxed' was also a popular choice for the quality of spaces desired by the students.

'Interactive' and 'Sensory' were not far behind with a combined total of 19 votes, showing that students are interested in engaging with their learning environments. Links between inside and outside space are also valued.

Performance Space was not valued as highly as other spaces and functions.

From the Student Drawings:

Students drew or noted practical facilities including a canteen, a gym, a lab and an art space. Some other spaces noted included club rooms (for chess or craft) and a nature room.

A recurring item in drawings and written comments was the desire for a retreat space, potentially expressing a need for privacy and individual control. This was variously described as a retreat, a student room, an anger release room, a fiddle room, a sensory space, and a girls' only room.

The students placed importance on internal features such as comfortable and homely seating, pillows and couches. They also commented on amenities such as heaters, stereos, mirrors in bathrooms, and private sanitary facilities for girls.

More imaginative features included a slide from the upper level, secret areas, underground rooms and tunnels, indoor pools and sports, and a rooftop lookout.





GROUP GATHERING



SOLITARY NOOKS



RELAXED



INTERACTIVE



INSIDE/OUTSIDE BREAKOUT



PRIVATE NOOK

# 2.0 Student Consultation

## MAPPING: Outside

What DO / DON'T you like about your school?

Participants indicated locations on a plan and described why they do or don't like those spaces.

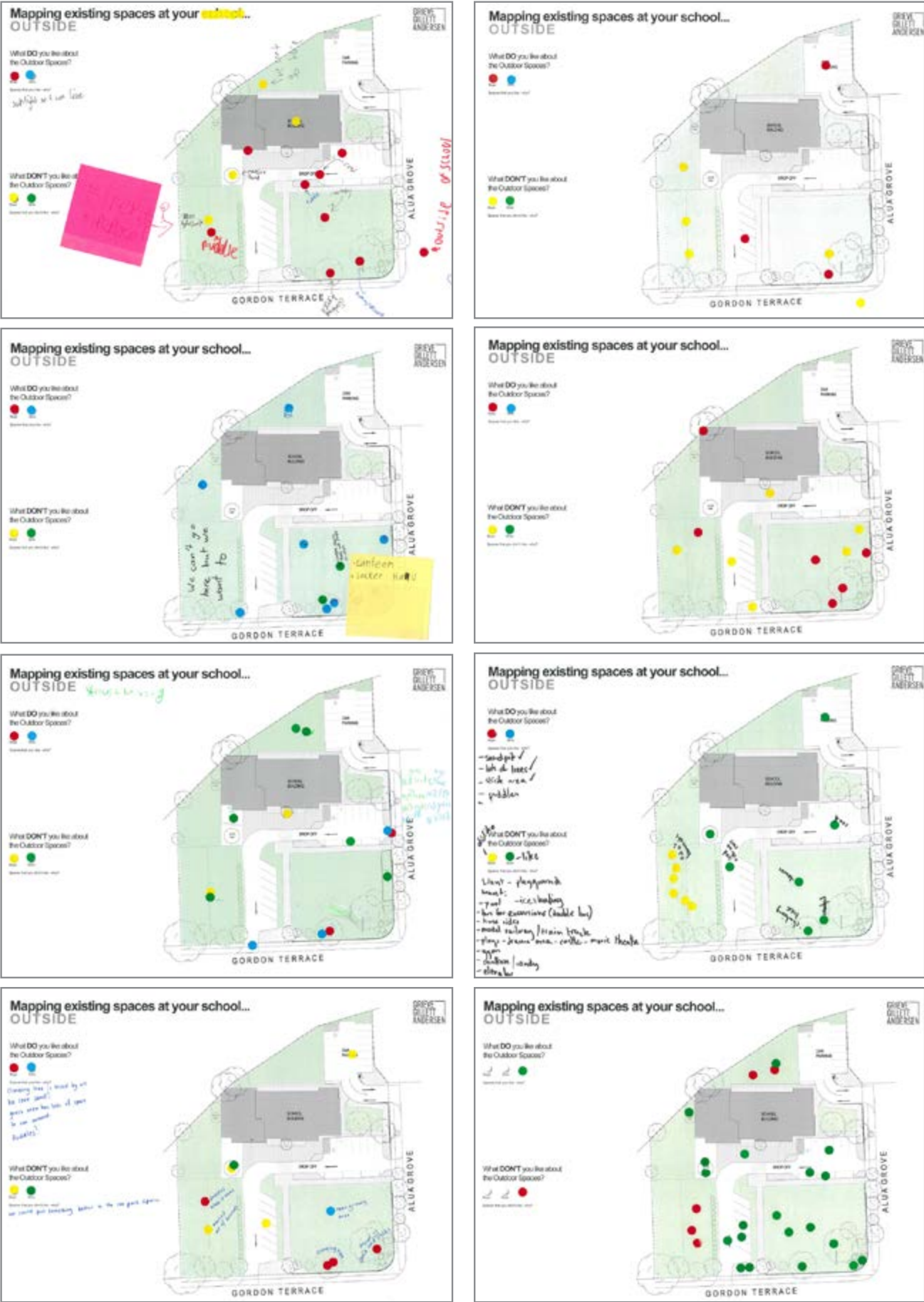
	LIKE	DON'T LIKE
STUDENTS	<p>Connection between Annexe and outdoors</p> <p>Front lawn and play area</p> <p>Climbing tree near front fence is well-loved by almost everyone</p> <p>Tree to left of vehicle exit</p> <p>Puddles when it rains</p> <p>Sandpit, mud, sticks area</p> <p>Lots of trees</p> <p>Driveway through site and car parks (when there are no cars)</p> <p>Entry and exit automatic gates</p> <p>Water tanks – a few like them</p> <p>Front paved area</p> <p>Garden area near vehicle exit</p>	<p>Water tank – many dislike it</p> <p>Can't go to the empty patches at the triangle area behind and to the left of the building – out of bounds areas are wasted</p> <p>Muddy areas</p> <p>Too many people in the lawn area at the same time playing footy and bumping into each other</p> <p>Sand (near vehicle entry) and rocks (near Annexe)</p> <p>Could put something better in the car park spaces</p> <p>Paved area in front of building</p> <p>Climbing tree – because everyone fights about who goes in and then they get stuck in there</p>

2.0 Student Consultation

MAPPING: Inside

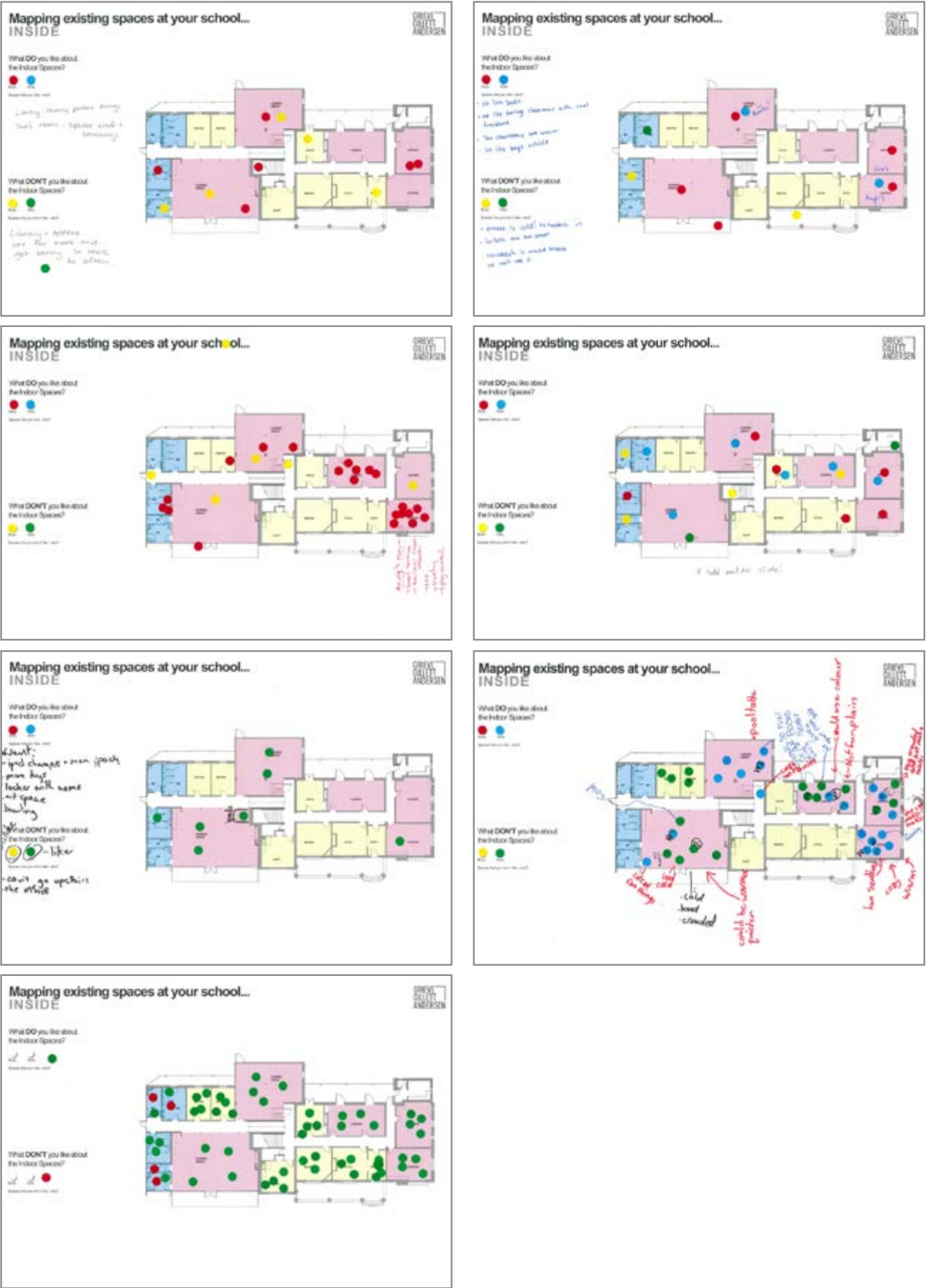
What DO / DON'T you like about your school?  
Participants indicated locations on a plan and described why they do or don't like those spaces.

	LIKE	DON'T LIKE
STUDENTS	<p>Annexe – lots of fun things, l-pads</p> <p>Library – is so fun, love the books, Harry Potter things, and has a heater</p> <p>Pool table</p> <p>Couch at the landing near the lift is cosy and quiet</p> <p>Learning rooms because they are warm and have cool furniture</p> <p>Learning room 3 (Andi's) – relaxing, cosy, fun seating, warm, music, subjects studied, Andi.</p> <p>Learning room 2 (Sue's) – spider chair and beanbags</p> <p>Learning room 1 – some like this room</p> <p>Area outside the annexe</p> <p>Girls' and boys' toilets</p> <p>Lynda's office</p> <p>Storing bags outside</p> <p>Stairs</p>	<p>Annexe gets very cold, and is noisy and crowded</p> <p>Annexe and Library are for work and can get boring as we are in there too often</p> <p>Two meeting rooms off the Annexe</p> <p>Learning room 1 – quite a few dislike this room. People do stuff behind your back, not fun, too plain, no interest apart from table, could use some colour</p> <p>Learning room 2 (Sue's) – too crowded and not many tables</p> <p>North exit door – not able to use it</p> <p>Stairs / upstairs – not able to use it</p> <p>Front verandah – not able to use it</p> <p>Individual toilet rooms</p> <p>Girls' and boys' toilets – too small</p> <p>Lynda's office</p> <p>The front office</p>



STUDENTS - OUTSIDE





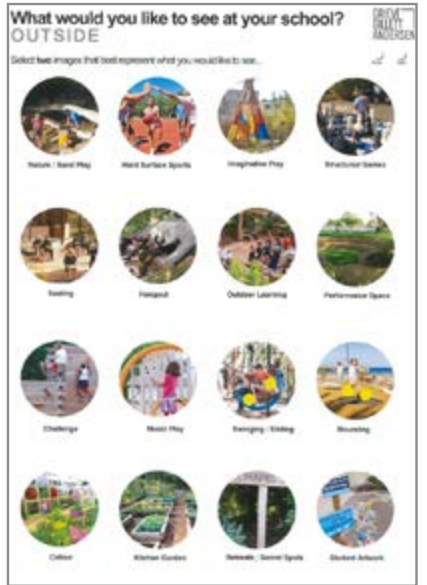
STUDENTS - INSIDE

# 2.0 Student Consultation

## INSPIRING: Outside

What would you like to see at your school?  
Participants selected two images that best represented what they wanted to see at their school.

	STUDENTS
Nature / Sand Play	8
Hard Surface Sports	6
Imaginative Play	4
Structured Games	6
Seating	4
Hangout	12
Outdoor Learning	3
Performance Space	4
Challenge	11
Music Play	3
Swinging / Sliding	12
Bouncing	11
Colour	5
Kitchen Garden	6
Retreats / Secret Spots	14
Student Artwork	5



## 2.0 Student Consultation

### INSPIRING: Inside

What would you like to see at your school?  
Participants selected two images that best represented what they wanted to see at their school.

	STUDENTS
Large Group Gathering	4
Small Groups	2
Relaxed	9
Quiet Nooks	19
Small Group Learning	5
Private Learning	7
Breakout	5
Performance	3
Inside / Outside	9
Mixed Use / STEM	7
Creative Making	7
Noisy Activities	7
Playful	6
Sensory	8
Colours / Shapes	6
Interactive	11





STUDENTS - INSIDE

# 2.0 Student Consultation

## WISH LIST: Outside

What would you like to see at your school?

Participants used pictures or words to describe what they would like to see at their school.

	Wish List
<b>Spaces / Facilities</b>	<p>Locker area, lockers with names</p> <p>Outdoor bookshelf with reading seats / reading nook that looks like a tree / reading hut</p> <p>A calm, clean, attractive outdoor spot where there is no footy allowed</p> <p>Bubbler with cold water, table for eating outside / drinking fountains</p> <p>Space to do acrobat things, with a crash mat</p> <p>Room to chat / a covered chill zone / outdoor benches / lunch seating</p> <p>Relax room and playground for OSHC</p> <p>Bus for excursions</p> <p>A lookout tower for teachers to warn students on the driveway of cars approaching</p>
<b>Garden Features</b>	<p>Productive garden with only fun things to eat like berries / fruit trees / orange tree</p> <p>Nature room and garden with a kitchen / cooking vegetables from the garden</p> <p>Hideout and grotto with a stone path / secret spaces</p> <p>A playground in the trees / tree house / tree climb / playground with vines between trees / treehouse full of consoles, TVs, video games for the uppers</p> <p>A big mushroom fairy house with a bed, kitchen, table and chairs</p> <p>A flower seat, plant-related tables and seats / a mushroom umbrella</p>
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Swimming pool / ice skating / a boys' pool and a girls' pool / water slide into a pool</p> <p>Firepit / outdoor fireplace</p> <p>Basketball court / dodge ball area</p> <p>Giant chess board</p> <p>Bikes, scooters, skateboards / skate park pit</p> <p>Horse rides / a horse riding area</p> <p>Plays, drama area, castle, magic theatre</p>





# 2.0 Student Consultation

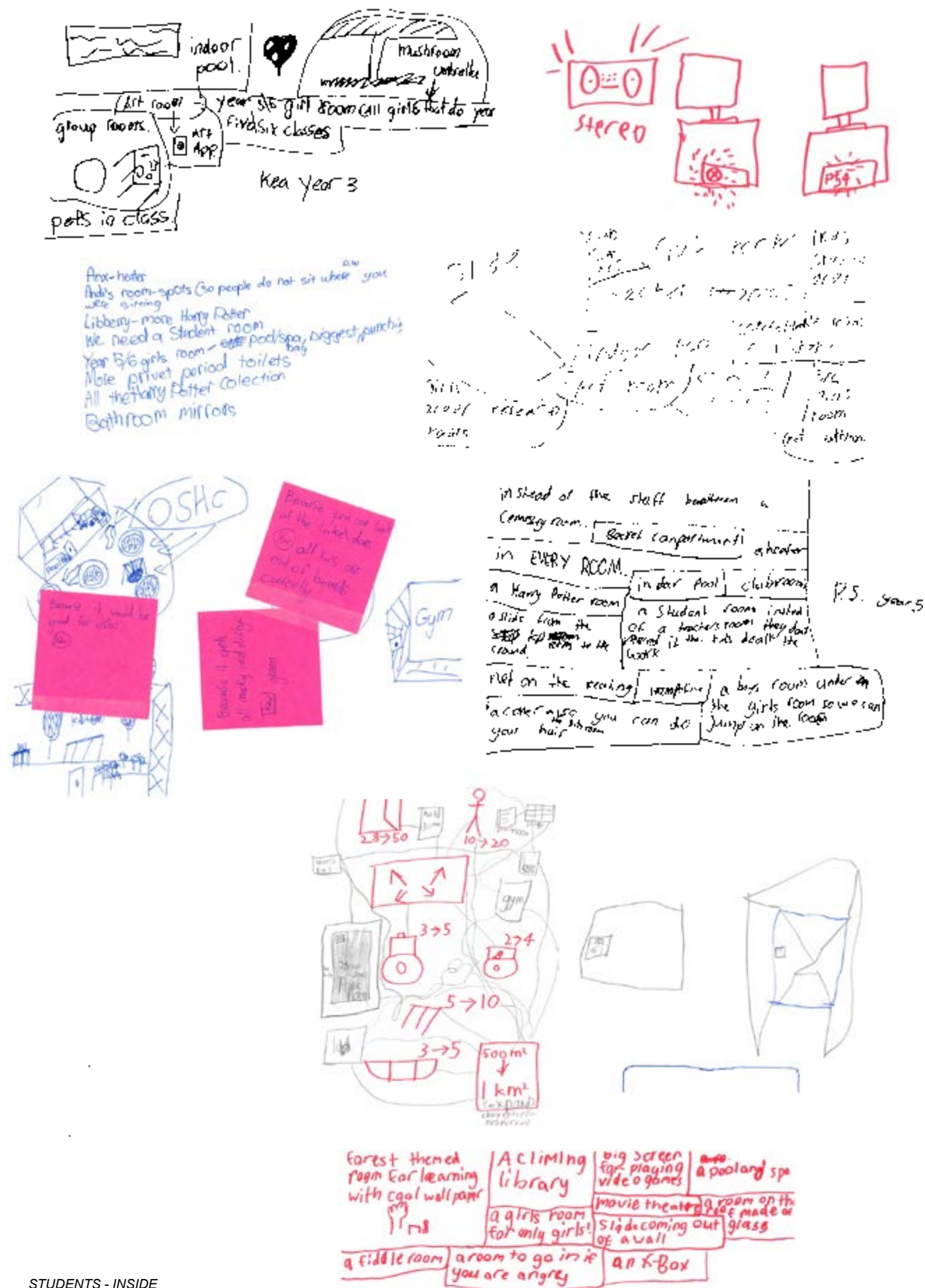
## WISH LIST: Inside

What would you like to see at your school?  
Participants used pictures or words to describe what they would like to see at their school.

	Wish List
Spaces / Facilities	<div>Canteen</div> <div>Gym</div> <div>Science lab</div> <div>Art space</div> <div>An elevator</div> <div>A chemistry room instead of the staff bathroom</div> <div>A student room / retreat</div> <div>Year 5/6 girls' room / a girls' room / a girls' anger release room with a big punching bag / a boys' room under a girls' room so we can jump on their room</div> <div>A panic room</div> <div>A fiddle room / sensory space / a room to go in if you are angry</div> <div>More I-pads, more teachers, more books, more toilets, more drop off spaces, buy adjacent land and expand the school</div>
Equipment / Furnishings	<div>I-pad chargers and more I-pads</div> <div>A big screen for playing video games / x-box / a movie theatre</div> <div>More toys</div> <div>Comfortable things / homely seating, window seats, pillows, couches, cool bookshelves</div> <div>More sitting spots in Andi's room so people don't take your spot</div> <div>Cool walls in corridors that look really cool and fun</div> <div>Cool chairs and tables in fun shapes like horses and mushrooms</div>



STUDENTS - OUTSIDE



STUDENTS - INSIDE

## 2.0 Student Consultation

### WISH LIST: Inside

What would you like to see at your school?

Participants used pictures or words to describe what they would like to see at their school.

	Wish List - continued
<b>Amenities</b>	<p>A heater in every room</p> <p>A stereo / music</p> <p>Mirrors in the bathrooms / space to do your hair</p> <p>More private sanitary facilities for girls</p>
<b>Indoor / Outdoor</b>	<p>Mini buildings for clubs – craft club, chess club / art room / club rooms / a Harry Potter room with books / Minecraft play room with costumes</p> <p>An underground classroom / vines from the roof / a tunnel leading out to a climbing frame</p> <p>A slide from the upper floor of the building / a slide coming out of a wall</p> <p>A nature room for natural crafts</p> <p>A locker hall with a glass door, a window and a drinking fountain / kids' storage area</p> <p>A forest themed room for learning with cool wallpaper</p>
<b>Creative Features</b>	<p>Secret areas / secret compartments</p> <p>A climbing library</p> <p>A lookout room on the roof made of glass</p> <p>Pets in class</p> <p>Indoor bowling</p> <p>Indoor pool / spa</p> <p>A net on the ceiling / hanging net for rainy days</p> <p>Pizza</p>



## 3.0 Staff Consultation

### Outside

Access into the site is controlled from the front desk, and leads to staff car parking as well as the main driveway.

How do staff currently experience the outside spaces?

- The staff like the automated entry gates into the site, but highlighted that there is no pedestrian gate adjacent.
- Staff car parking area is liked.
- The driveway through the site was disliked, potentially as a clash of uses / hazard.
- The front lawn and play area were highlighted as positive spaces liked by everyone.
- Water tanks are disliked.
- Empty unfinished dirt areas were disliked, such as the areas to the north of the site, to the side and rear of the building.

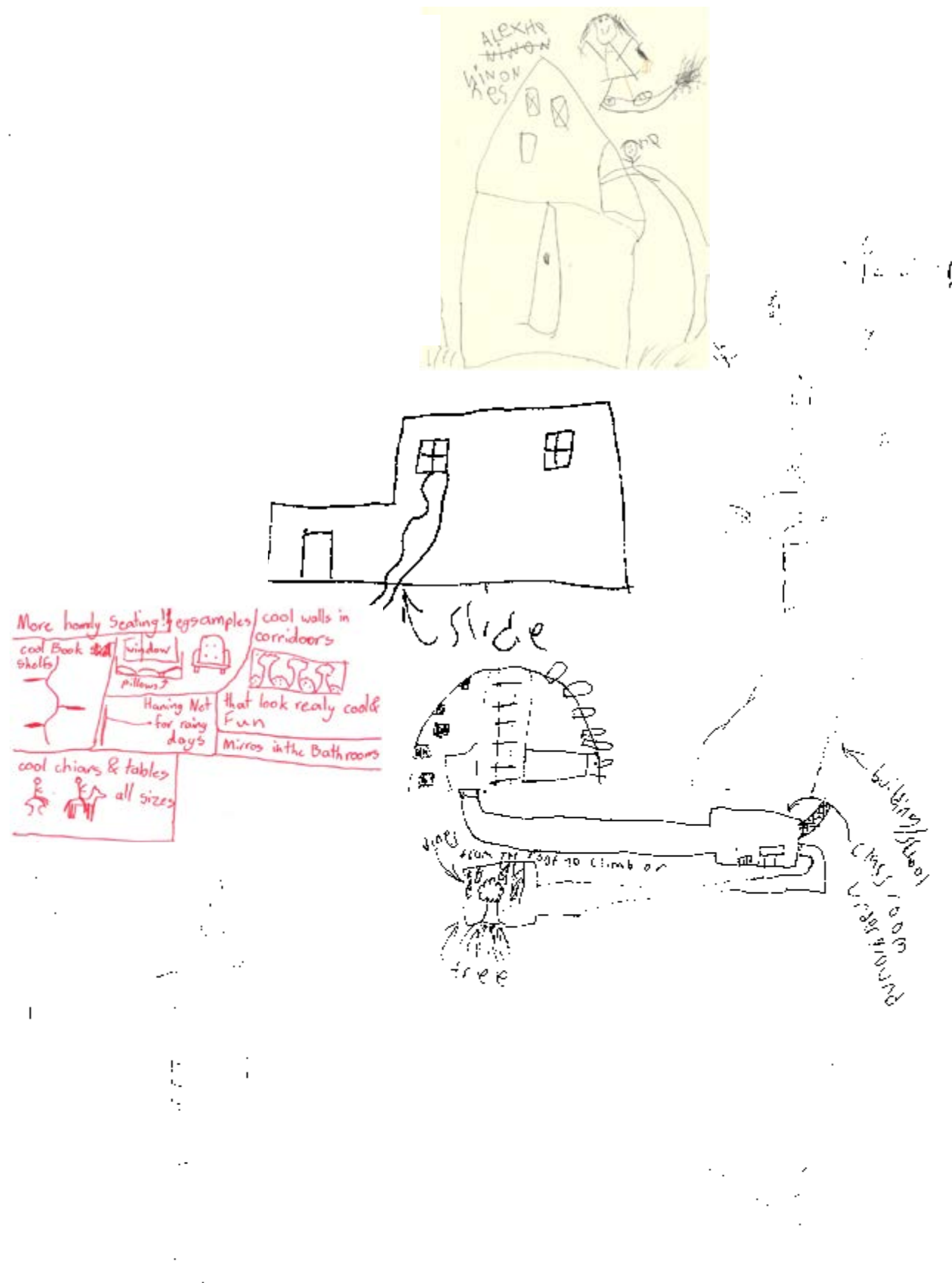
What would you like to see at your school?

The top choices made by staff are identified below:

- Seating
- Kitchen Garden
- Structured Games
- Performance Space

Opportunities for seating was a popular choice for staff, and reflected the meeting discussions around spots for students to eat their lunches (as they currently sit on the driveway kerb), to sit in groups at play time, and to support the possibility of outdoor learning opportunities. Additional indoor / outdoor connections would be appreciated, as in the Annexe.

The staff like the current active play lawn area and would like the undeveloped dirt areas to be further enhanced. They were keen to include facilities such as hard play surfaces, structured games, ball skills and physical education opportunities. Good visibility and the ability for one staff member to supervise all outdoor play areas at once was noted.







STRUCTURED GAMES



CONSTRUCTED SHADE



IMAGINATIVE PLAY



OUTDOOR LEARNING



NATURAL SHADE



CHALLENGE



NATURE PLAY

## 3.0 Staff Consultation

### Inside

Cobham Hall accommodates all administrative facilities, front office and principal's office, and staff amenities. Staff toilets are individual cubicles accessed from the Annexe space. The Annexe is also used for staff meetings and debriefing at the end of the day. The upper level is currently only available for staff use.

How do staff currently experience the inside spaces?

- The Annexe is well-liked, including its connection to outdoors and the visibility of the outdoor play area. As with the students, the staff disliked how it gets cold and noisy.
- As mentioned by the students, the two meeting rooms / offices off the Annexe are disliked.
- Library and the three learning rooms are liked.
- Staff room and toilet facilities are also liked.
- The staff dislike not being able to use the upstairs area with the students.

What would you like to see at your school?

The top choices made by staff are identified below:

- Private Learning
- Inside / Outside Connection
- Quiet Nooks
- Sensory
- Large Group Gathering

The staff value both large and small scale spaces that can accommodate a variety of functions. There was an appreciation for large group spaces, in addition to the smaller more private or quiet spots which overlapped with the students' desire for these smaller spaces.

'Inside / Outside' connectivity was popular, reflecting the staff appreciation for the existing Annexe and its visual connection to the outside area.

Another overlap with the student selections was 'Sensory', a request that was also mentioned by staff in the meeting discussions. This may also have a parallel with some of the student drawings in which retreats, time out spaces and anger management rooms featured.



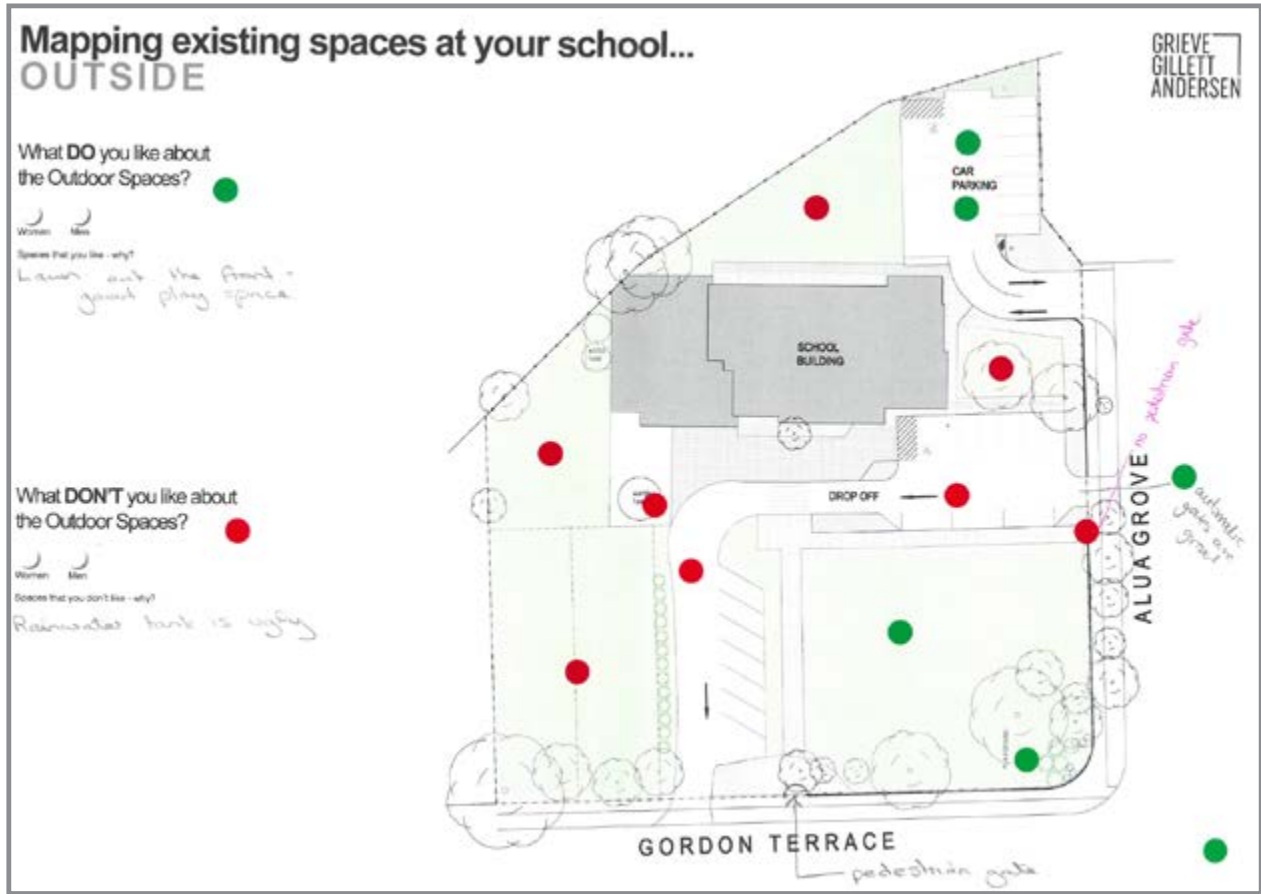


# 3.0 Staff Consultation

## MAPPING: Outside

What DO / DON'T you like about your school?  
Participants indicated locations on a plan and described why they do or don't like those spaces.

	LIKE	DON'T LIKE
STAFF	Automatic entry gates Front lawn and play area Staff car parking	No pedestrian gate at entry Water tank All the empty patches of dirt (rear triangle, patch to the left of the building, small patch to the right of building) Driveway through site



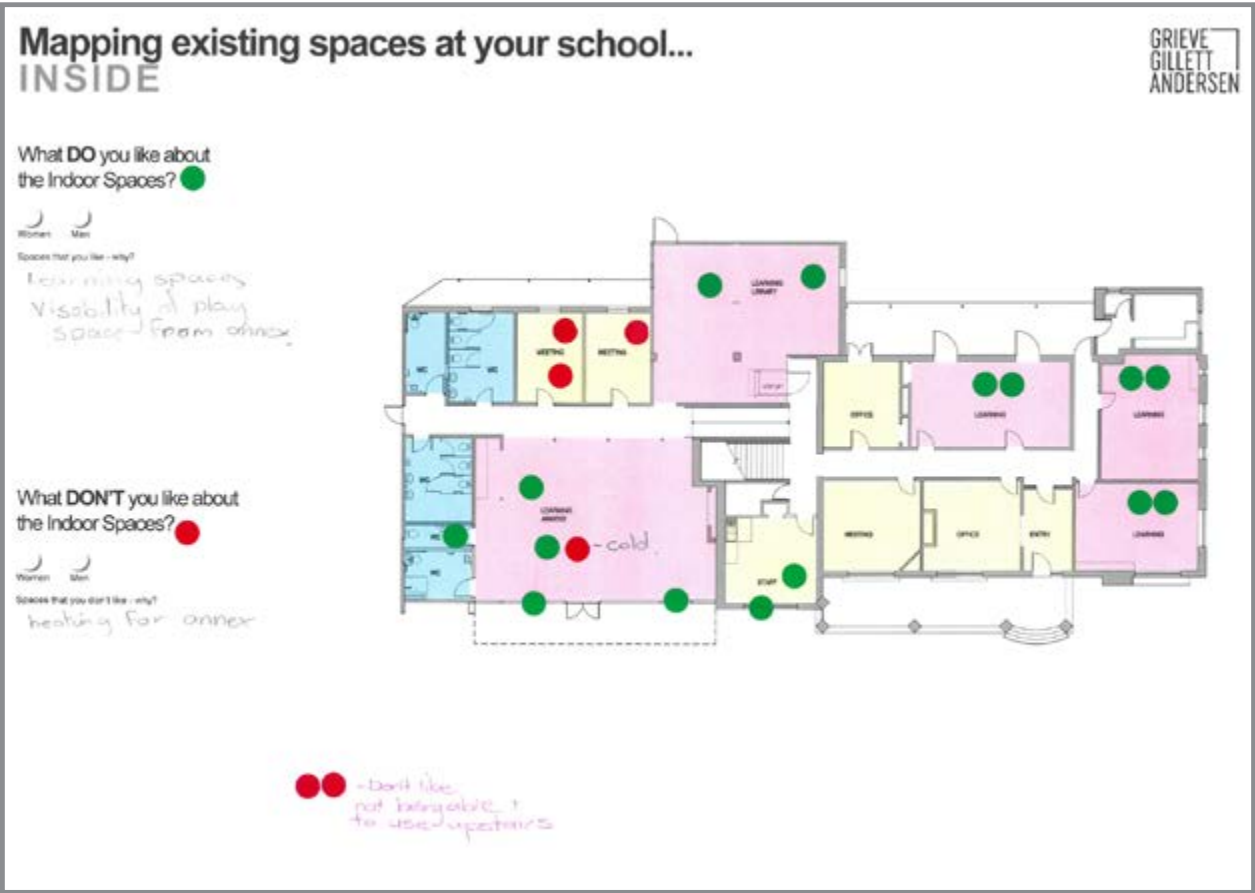
STAFF - OUTSIDE

# 3.0 Staff Consultation

## MAPPING: Inside

What DO / DON'T you like about your school?  
Participants indicated locations on a plan and described why they do or don't like those spaces.

	LIKE	DON'T LIKE
STAFF	Annexe Library Learning rooms x 3 Staff room Toilet Visibility of outdoor play area from the Annexe	Two meeting rooms off the Annexe Annexe gets very cold Not being able to use upstairs



STAFF - INSIDE

# 3.0 Staff Consultation

## INSPIRING: Outside

What would you like to see at your school?  
Participants selected two images that best represented what they wanted to see at their school.

	STAFF
Nature / Sand Play	1
Hard Surface Sports	1
Imaginative Play	1
Structured Games	2
Seating	3
Hangout	1
Outdoor Learning	1
Performance Space	2
Challenge	1
Music Play	1
Swinging / Sliding	1
Bouncing	1
Colour	1
Kitchen Garden	3
Retreats / Secret Spots	1
Student Artwork	1



STAFF - OUTSIDE



# 3.0 Staff Consultation

## INSPIRING: Inside

What would you like to see at your school?  
Participants selected two images that best represented what they wanted to see at their school.

	STAFF
Large Group Gathering	2
Small Groups	1
Relaxed	1
Quiet Nooks	2
Small Group Learning	1
Private Learning	3
Breakout	1
Performance	1
Inside / Outside	3
Mixed Use / STEM	1
Creative Making	1
Noisy Activities	1
Playful	1
Sensory	2
Colours / Shapes	1
Interactive	1



STAFF - INSIDE

# 3.0 Staff Consultation

## STAFF MEETING NOTES

1. Reflecting on where you are now:  
  
What is special about Dara School, and how does that influence staff, student learning, curriculum, school environment, and facilities?
1. Current operations:  
  
A day-in-the-life for teachers and admin staff.
2. Thinking about the future:  
  
What would you like to see at your school?

DARA SCHOOL MASTERPLAN

STAFF CONSULTATION – NOTES OF MEETING

01.07.20

1. What is special about Dara School, and how does that influence staff, curriculum, facilities?

Why work at Dara, how is it different?

- Differentiation, being able to meet the diverse needs of individual kids
- Creating an environment that is not ‘one size fits all’
- A teaching system that is not linear
- Being able to do additional things outside the standard curriculum
- Rather than getting the child to fit the system, being able to adjust the curriculum to fit the child
- Able to grow students’ strengths, to empower them, to make a difference to the children’s lives
- Consultation with the students, helping them to steer their learning path
- Seeing gifted children able to connect and relate to their peers

What does it mean for staff?

- More empowering – not bound by the system
- More tailored – if children are ready to move up, they can without having to wait a whole year
- Teachers traditionally are more in control but at Dara it means that teachers have to let go of control and help the child take control. Takes a different kind of teacher
- Get to go off on tangents if that’s where the interest goes – ‘going with the flow’
- Need to be open-minded, flexible, adaptable, humble. Teachers learn how to be corrected or challenged
- Scaffold and structure – the staff need to create a structure to the learning but it’s behind the scenes

What does it mean for student learning?

- Each student is an individual. Students are empowered to control and direct their own learning journey
- Doing things differently – grouping by ability rather than by age for individual subjects
- Aspiration is that students are in control of their learning environment, time and space – can choose where and how to work that suits them best
- The end-point scaffolding is in place – students know where they are and where they want to go. Staff mentor and the curriculum supports them to move to the next stage when they’re ready
- Flexibility – a student could do maths all day if they want, and balance their other work out across the week
- Let children fail – then they realise that if they don’t do their work they have to spend their time catching up
- Younger kids are grouped quite well. Older ones are more independent and have independent learning time

What does it mean for the curriculum?

- There is definitely an academic focus – particularly maths and science, plus English and humanities
- Greater provision for science on site (not off-campus) will be important to progress – science labs
- Does not typically attract students that will do VET at year 10 – 12, therefore tech is not a priority
- At this point music is not a priority – don’t have a music teacher. Noted that many gifted students also play an instrument and that there may be some students lost due to not offering music
- Whatever we do, we need to do it well
- While there is an academic focus, it also fosters social skills and well-being

What does it mean for the learning environment?

- The students are all in the same space and must be able to accommodate lots of people and groups effectively (comfort and acoustics)
- Learning environment must be flexible and inviting to support the flexible curriculum, and to encourage students to discover how they learn best
- Comfortable furnishings
- Variety of spaces that give children choices for their learning
- Large group spaces and smaller group rooms are important
- Withdrawal spaces and cubicle spaces for private study and focus
- Some children feel a need to have control so still need some individual spaces
- Technology – using projectors at the moment, this is difficult to coordinate with multiple groups in a large space. Connie is looking at storage, upgrades, maintenance. A Technical Audit and Plan is required to inform future directions – Dara to undertake

2. How is the existing school experienced? What works and what doesn’t?

A day in the life of Dara School

Example 1: TANIA – Educator: maths / science, younger students

- Arrive at 8, look for a warm space. Look at tasks on laptop and have conversations with colleagues
- At 8:30 go to annexe. Communicating and welcoming students
- At 9 there is the morning meeting for 10 min, with the whole school in the annexe
- First block of morning learning. Break mid-way depending on children’s needs
- Break for recess outside after the first block, children sit along the driveway kerb for eating. If on duty, will stay out, if not will head inside to the staff room for 20 mins or so
- Second block of learning in the same area. Two other groups teaching at the same time
- Break for lunch, as per recess
- Afternoon block of learning, until end of the day



What works well for Tania:

- Having a place to greet and gather together works well – teachers and children only. Not a space for parents
- Eye contact with outside areas – passive surveillance from inside to outside
- Annexe area has an under-cover space, so that children can work outside
- The site is fenced and gated so the yard is safe
- Having students not bring all their belongings inside – keep them outside

What doesn't work for Tania:

- Lack of outdoor seating, sitting in the gutter to eat. Would like a place to share the eating experience
- Need bag hooks outside
- There is currently no outside access to toilets for students during lunch and recess
- Annexe – gets cold and noisy
- No issues with storage currently
- Have not experienced summer at this site yet – need to consider shade for the yard

A day in the life of Dara School

Example 2: MEG – Admin / Reception – new to the school

- Arrive, open up the office, find a warm spot, check emails and pigeon hole
- Process arrivals and sign in late students who come through the front office. Phone parents if no-shows
- Sign in visitors as required
- Filing, emails, enquiries, transferring calls, auto gates control
- Break at 11
- Undertake other tasks as required, such as proofreading

What doesn't work for Meg:

- When late arrivals don't come via the front office for sign in and can't do roll call – have to track down kids
- Admin area feels very separate from teaching area – feels like always interrupting, not sure when is a good time to interrupt classes. (Could be a physical issue or a training / communication issue)
- Whole of team 'download' at end of day used to happen all together, now only for teaching staff as it occurs while reception staff are still required to be at the front desk so Admin staff are not included. Download occurs in the annexe, separated from front desk so no connection
- No line of sight on who's coming in the front door

**3. What would you like to see at your school?**

Wish-list comments that arose during general discussions. These can be reviewed, developed and prioritised as the masterplan progresses.

- Specialist facilities on site are important to be taken seriously as a legitimate pathway for secondary school.
- Science lab equipment – in the near future
- A multi-purpose space for arts and science – wet space
- Potential to include music down the track
- Tech, art, design, textiles – basic provision eg soldering / 3d printing / robotics, not a full workshop (as it's not in the curriculum)
- Cooking – basic provision, not full Home Ec (as it's not in the curriculum). Could be part of a larger multi-purpose space but must have separation from science sinks for safety reasons
- Withdrawal space, sensory room
- Sensory garden (refer Autism SA in Elizabeth)
- Something to swing on/in and for physical movement – helpful for children
- WC cubicles that are full height for privacy. Access to WCs from outside
- Retain the benefits of the school interior being a non-parent space during Covid – increased independence
- Technology other than projectors – portable? Interactive TV's?
- Outside would be good to have a range of focussed / smaller spaces, vegetable garden, butterfly garden
- Physical activity – range of types and ground surfaces (hard, soft play)
- Do something about the water tank
- Outdoor seating, lunch tables, ability to have learning groups outside
- Outdoor storage / bag hooks / organisation for student belongings
- There is currently no outside access to toilets for students during lunch and recess (side door to be activated)
- Review of comfort levels in the annexe – acoustics and heating
- Ability to use the upstairs level for students



NATURE PLAY



ADDITIONAL STORAGE



NATURAL SHADE



QUIET NOOKS



GROUP SEATING



PRIVATE NOOK



COMFORTABLE AND VARIED

# 4.0 School Board Consultation

## SCHOOL BOARD MEETING NOTES

1. **Reflecting on where you are now:**  
What does Dara School mean to you? What is the public identity of Dara School?
2. **Thinking about the future:**  
What are the Board's aspirations and vision for Dara School – in 1 year, 2 years, 5 years? Longer term?
3. **Issues, challenges and opportunities:**  
What are the main issues and opportunities – for the curriculum? For the physical spaces?
4. **Masterplan outcomes:**  
How would you judge the success of the masterplan? What do you want it to achieve, what is the aim?



DARA SCHOOL MASTERPLAN

SCHOOL BOARD CONSULTATION – NOTES OF MEETING

27.07.20

1. **Reflecting on where you are now:**  
*What does Dara School mean to you? What is the public identity of Dara School?*

John:
  - Not a parent of the school, wife teaches at Dara and was frustrated with mainstream school system.
  - Public identity is limited in that it is not known by most people. John brings a different angle to the marketing.

Lynda:
  - The idea started in 2016. Dara was needed to fill a gap of something that is missing in mainstream education. It provides the opportunity to cater to a specific group of students that can't fit in, who experienced mainstream education as 'plugging a square peg in a round hole'. Gives them the chance to find 'their tribe'.
  - Not just about academia, it provides social and emotional support as well, connection to peers and teachers.
  - Public identity – initially only in SA, but have had families move to Adelaide, plus enquiries nationally and internationally. It's not just an Adelaide School. Vision is to be on the international stage in 10 years.

Sophia:
  - Dara is life changing. Majority of parents are at the school as they have watched their children's 'light go out' in mainstream schools. Many parents see this as the last resort. As a parent, coming to Dara is a game changer – the school can change the trajectory of lives for some kids.
  - Sees the school as a trail blazer and disruptor.
  - Quality of life – there's an assumption that if kids are gifted they will be ok and succeed, but this is not necessarily the case and there are mental health concerns when they are not supported. Social and emotional connection gives kids quality lives. Parallel with kids at the other extreme end of the bell curve – often need specialist learning plans to maximise their abilities as well.
  - Fairness and equity – it levels the playing field for children who are 'different'.
  - Public identity – is currently an unknown factor for the community, but in gifted pockets, people are watching it. In 5 – 10 years, the school will be known internationally.
  - Children can find their peers and are able to connect. They are in a safe space, seen and understood. Staff also seek to understand kids.
  - Benefit for the parents. 40 gifted kids may mean 80 gifted parents who also struggled at school. Parents have been able to find people with whom they connect and a place they belong – find their tribe as well.

Geordie:
  - The school is a lifeline for some of the children (and also the parents).
  - On the board, things can be messy but it's like building a fire – lots of smoke but eventually takes hold and requires less maintenance. Will the fire go out? How do we sustain the fire to keep it burning into the future?
  - It's a beacon for many. Can it be a template – possibility to translate the lessons learnt from Dara to other schools (not funded).
  - Public identity – slow burn is OK for now, there is no real capacity to grow at this point.

2. **Thinking about the future:**  
*What are the Board's aspirations and vision for Dara School – in 1 year, 2 years, 5 years? Longer term?*

John:
  - 2 years – at capacity in current location with a waiting list. 80 or 90 kids.
  - 5 years – additional campus. Could be primary / secondary split, or northern / southern geographic split.
  - 10 years – grand vision, explore national and international campus.

Lynda:
  - In the next 5 years – currently registered for years 1-12, therefore it is important to see some students go through SACE. Specialist facilities such as Science Lab, Art room, Library. To own the site rather than renting.
  - Additional campus – north / south or east / west campus, to replicate existing on another site in Adelaide.
  - No need for sub-schools or age group clusters as they prohibit fluidity for access to the curriculum. Need to keep the flow of the educational journey across the whole school.
  - Dara won't specialise in one area. There is an interest in access to music, so facilitating lessons in study time are being trialled, but not a specialist music teacher/programme. Dara won't be specialists in particular subjects, but will specialise in learning processes and integration of subjects, eg. science/maths + creative.

Geordie:
  - 2 years – need a business manager to help the school develop.
  - 5 years – maximise capacity of the current site, own instead of rent. A second campus in Adelaide.
  - 10 years – national / international stage. Can 'DARA' be a brand name for gifted education (like Hoover)?
  - School to be known as the employer of choice for excellent teachers. Connections with the Masters for Gifted Education program. Potential to train up teachers and send them out into the community to increase access to gifted education to the kids who can't come to Dara.
  - Making other connections – building strong links with industry and academia, and with other inspiring people.

Sophia:
  - 1 year – focus on the school environment and see the school settle into the site. Provision of a Library, Canteen, OSHC, sort out the landscaping of the site. Additional staffing such as a business manager. Interested in making the best teaching spaces, looking at custom furniture and bespoke design.
  - 2 years – establish external relationships to provide inspiration / mentors for children (eg kid building rocket).
  - 5 years – ownership of site, especially the three blocks in the short term, as this is a risk for the school. Building a reputation as the experts in gifted education, make connections to academia and other schools – sharing the knowledge to raise the bar for all schools, finding a way to reach the potential 16,000 gifted children in SA. Another campus. Equity of access for those kids who can't afford or can't access Dara.
  - Possibility of adding Reception and Preschool. (Currently year 1 – 12.) This has quite a different set of requirements so maybe would be looked at in the near future. Possible partnerships with ELCs.
  - Specialising in one area is challenging for a small school as they can't compete with an established music school. Aim to be known as a school for gifted kids, helping them establish social and emotional connection. Prefers to aim for a general program that looks to the future for types of thinking such as pattern recognition, creative thinking etc. Not a 'normal school' – a place for kids to be creative and grow.

# 5.0 Parents Consultation

## Facilitated directly by Dara School

**3. Issues, challenges and opportunities:**

*What are the main issues and opportunities – for the curriculum? For the physical spaces?*

This question has been quite well covered in the above discussions regarding curriculum (under control by the school), site and facilities. Resolving priorities:

- Site ownership – there is a need to acquire the three blocks and the school site.
- Additional programs – Reception / ELC.
- Facilities – Science Lab, Art Room, Library, Reception room, OSCH dedicated room (1 year plans). More classrooms. Use of the upstairs area.
- Consolidating existing site with growth of numbers.

**4. Masterplan outcomes:**

*How would you judge the success of the masterplan? What do you want it to achieve, what is the aim?*

Geordie:

- Have an understanding of the staging of works and what each part of the site would ultimately be used for.
- Costs / outcomes / milestones, that can be used to sell the ideas and assist with funding.
- Should provide an agreed direction and a series of milestones that creates a legacy document that stands independent of the board. Regardless of a change in personnel the masterplan will outlive the individual board tenure.

John:

- A plan that has everyone aligned and on the same page, that the board can use to get funding.

Sophia:

- Will help Dara to know how we can best use the space we have, correlating that against student numbers.
- Resolution around how the site houses the educational journey of the students – what extra areas are needed for OSHC, ELC / Reception; or for SACE / grade 12. Dealing with site ownership and acquiring the 3 blocks.
- Stages and costs for each stage, use to attract funding. We need to know what we are raising money for.
- Having a masterplan will help create certainty – embedding the path and a common direction into the vision for the community, and having a sense of progress as milestones are met.

Lynda:

- Milestones – setting out in black and white what needs to be achieved and how to achieve it.
- Resolving site acquisition.
- An agreed masterplan will help the board to write a strategic plan to match.
- Having everyone on the same page – buy consensus from the group.

The school ran a survey and also an online session to discuss similar topics to those covered in the other consultation sessions.

Survey: 11 parent responses

Online discussion: 9 parents involved.

Comments:

- Most 'wish list' items were very similar to those already raised – a few additional 'detail' items such as robot duelling / whiteboard paint / fridges.

- Most curricular items were also very similar – there were some additional comments on extra-curricular activities, sports teams, and interactions with other schools.

- There were some varied perceptions raised regarding how to accommodate 'senior school' kids, with some parents anticipating a zoned campus with separated junior and senior facilities both inside (eg a new building for seniors with specialised facilities) and outside (eg zoned play areas, concerns about how big kids would fit in the current play areas). The rest of the consultation has steered more towards a concept of a more flowing and connected approach, with groups relating to subject and ability rather than age.

- There were some perceptions that the school would expand in physical size, with comments regarding the purchase of adjacent blocks, while the main direction from the board prioritised the purchase of the current site.

Overall there was a lot of crossover and similarities between the parent feedback and the other groups, which reflects the sense of a tight-knit community with everyone invested in the intent and purpose of the school. The parent feedback essentially reinforces many of the points raised by the other groups, and also confirms the school's ethos. There was no parent feedback that dramatically conflicted with that provided by the other sessions.



Why send your child to Dara? How is it different?	What does it mean for your child and family?	What does Dara School mean to you?	What would you like to see at your school?	What is your aspiration and vision for Dara School - in 1 year, 2 years, 5 years, longer term?	What are the main issues and opportunities - for the curriculum, for the physical spaces?
28.08.20 10:08am	It caters for 2E children	Some where for my child to fit in without hiding herself	A proper high school	1y- grow the school to 100 students. 2y- employs high school teachers. 5y- cater for a range of high school subjects with specialist teachers coming in to teach them. Long term- buy up the neighbours, build more buildings, grow the school to a R-12 with 2 classes of 15-20 students for each year level.	Need to build another building and have the high school students in a separate quite area to learn.
10:38am	Main stream school totally failed my kids, we were in crisis and desperate. It's totally different, my kids can be themselves.	Everything. It has and will change their lives. Mental health has improved, they are happy. We can connect with other families who have shared experiences and my kids don't need to hide at school. family is every thing for us.	Zoned gardens. Custom learning environments. Reception class.	Curated environment for learning. Social and emotional development program. Extension in specialised areas of interest available. Stability then building a strong school then building relationships with industry and academia. longer term	Communicating how kids learn. Developing the space. The school does growth mindset really, really well. I would like to see more engagement with science. need more extra activities
11:06am 11:07am	Dara supports the mental well-being of my kids. No other better place for him	A place where the family can be part of a community without being defensive. My sons future	More of a focus on science. values, education		
29.08.20 7:22pm	No other school understood how to truly extend a child. Understanding that being gifted does not mean you necessarily test well or can do everything equally. Understanding that with giftedness comes challenges.	To 'fit in', to be understood.	xplicit Social emotional learning. Music. Less screen time.	Nature play, loose parts play/ exploration, different app to school stream, more humanities,	Playground! How will high school work?
8:50pm	Dara has provided my child the opportunity to be challenged in a supportive environment. The smaller class sizes, the trained and understanding teachers and curriculum provided is flexible to allow him	A new hope			
9:07pm	smaller class sizes, teachers who understand giftedness and the challenges that comes with educating gifted children, and a small community of parents who are all in the same boat. It is different because children do not need to "skip a grade" but are given work based on their ability and not their age.	My child's strengths and weaknesses.	More of the same. I love the staff and how they really understand the kids. I think no amount of resources, playground equipment or anything else would improve the school. The most important is teachers who understand our kids needs.	I don't have any ideas.	the only reason my son wants to go back to his old school is because then he could play on a basketball team. The distance of families at Dara makes it difficult to set up sports teams. But the kids are provided with other opportunities like debating that he wouldn't have otherwise done.
9:49pm	My child was lonely, unengaged, disruptive and angry at the last school. He couldn't relate to anyone else. He kept telling me that he was different and he didn't understand why. No one wanted to be his friend, and it was like he was on a different planet to everyone else. Dara is different because there is no "same peer group" requirement, he knows there are others like him, the teachers and staff do not look to blame me for his behaviour, I do not have to fight for him to be extended nor am I treated like a liar about his peculiar abilities, there is no judgement from parents, staff or the other children, he can be extended to an extent that would be inconceivable at any other school. Lastly, there are strategies for sensory challenges that students experience, instead of being told he is uncontrollable and disruptive. Expert's recommendations do not seem to be ignored, which was our experience at the last school. This was our last option before homeschooling which would have been impossible on only one wage without family supports as in our case.	I am so happy with Dara but if anything was possible, OSHC, Canteen, Robot battles, Debating team, scholarships, ethics, Old Scholars, dedicated Chemistry labs, the school's own unit of currency that children could trade, always small class sizes, fetes, countries within the school that require visas and passports to visit with ambassadors, discos, mock trial team, less screen time, scholarships.	Issues- funding. Opportunities- nature play spaces, chemistry labs, ethics, robot wars, debating club, mock trial, discos, sensory room, library space for "spy week" "book week parades" "dragons and mythological creatures" "space and aliens" theme weeks or months. Robot battling arena. Design of student "companies" for fetes.	1 year - OSHC, canteen, less screen time. 2 years- school's own unit of currency which children can trade, ethics, robot battles, chemistry labs. 5 years- old scholars, quarterly fetes, big school small class sizes, more nature play spaces	Students too. To offer a variety of subjects you likely need more students, how will you do this given this isn't a central location that is easy to get to?
30.08.20 8:17 pm	There's nowhere else that can provide adequate education for my children, or accept them as they are, quirks and all. My child was very unhappy at mainstream primary school.	Acceptance, and excellence in education	Facilities for music/science labs/tech studies	Kids matriculating here, having done all of their schooling at Dara.	Bus service
04.09.2020 8:44am	My child's talents, potential and special needs were not being met at her last school. It was recommended we try a smaller school. We went for smaller and more specialised.	Child who is happy and succeeding at school	Bus service to city	Bus service	Issues, at the moment I can't see how a highschool with all the opportunity a gifted teen is likely to want will fit into the current space. I would like to see the upstairs space of the current building being used by the students too. To offer a variety of subjects you likely need more students, how will you do this given this isn't a central location that is easy to get to?

## Parent Consultation - Masterplan

### Group 1 - Heather

What does Dara School mean to you?	What is the public identity of Dara School?
It's a place where we can be honest about our kids without fear of judgement. The kids are free to be who they are. Once you learn to let go(!) it's so much easier as a parent knowing the school has things in hand, and are supporting our kids.	Somewhat unknown. Australia's best and only school for gifted children. All students are math geniuses, elitist, majority autistic students or poor social skills. Hot housed kids (what we fear people think) (gifted = high performance at all costs)

What is your aspiration and vision for Dara School, in...

1 Year	2 Years	5 Years	10 plus years
Moving into highschool More playground equipment Outdoor furniture Fridge/Lockers	Chem/Science Lab Mini Golf Course Music Program	Public Image/Advertising Achievements Tournament of the Minds type teams achieving in the public eye	Knock down the street to expand, move. 2nd Campus, either for upper years or north and south campuses
		Collaboration with Universities Study Uni within Dara School if finished with HS curriculum	
		Bus Fleet - 3 buses	

### What are the biggest concerns & main priorities for parents?

Before Enrolling (Application Process)	While enrolled
Academic needs being met This being the right choice Social and emotional needs of the child	How will high school work? Performances, Sports Days, Interschool Teams What are the kids learning? How are they tracking?
Being judged for thinking traditional school is not good enough for your snowflake Moving to be able to attend Lack of understanding of the school from the outside	Extracurricular type activities being offered
Waiting on an interview with no feedback Waiting for an offer with no feedback Needing to talk to another parent about what the school is about - add a parent contact to the school prospectus	

### Group 2 - David

What does Dara School mean to you?	What is the public identity of Dara School?
Means absolutely everything. Looked at homeschooling - this was the only option. Last resort in terms of schooling. Mainstream was not working for our children. Look at things that are offered - you think they are great, eg. Music, Sport - but still didn't work. Unique community and one we desperately needed. Other schools not able to accommodate needs, and not able to engage them at their level.	Not much public identity yet. Only word of mouth at the moment. No public perception of what it's all about. Comes back to the general public perception of Giftedness. There's an online awareness - known within the Gifted and Talented community. Some national profile within those circles.

### What is your aspiration and vision for Dara School, in...

1 Year	2 Years	5 Years	10 plus years
Robot duelling Facility. Emphasis on STEAM and moving beyond. Like to see more langauges available. More emphasis on AI. Computing and coding.	Building for the highschool - secondary education on the agenda. Deliver the best tailored education experience to the individual. Be as holistic as you can in educational offering. Excellence and individualised care. Some highschool facilities built. Partnerships with other places that can offer choice at highschool level.	Smaller class sizes but bigger school. Greater access - more schools - campuses. What does a Gifted Yr 12 programme look like? Shape these children to cope with the rigors of day to day life. Highschool facilities built and actively used by this time- tech, science arts labs, etc.	A bigger school for Gifted children R-12. With balance - too big may loose appeal. Small classes remain. Industry partnerships with bigger companies. More emphasis on ethics and how to be a good person. Philosophy, Social Sciences.

### What are the biggest concerns & main priorities for parents?

Before Enrolling (Application Process)	While enrolled
Amenities - too noisy for a small place. Letting go of the concept of traditional learning.	Deciding factor - how are you going to deal with individual needs - eg. sensory issues. They weren't phased.
Two siblings in one school - not too disruptive for them? Initially that it would be the right fit, and that your child is stimulated, happy, and ultimately thrive. Ok for our child socially, given very young age. Social emotional development. Ok to jump grades - ok to be with peers that are not his age?	Making sure it is the best fit for the kids. What about when they get into the real world? Will they be prepared for this? Communication about what goes on at School. Didn't know how well he was doing academically.

	There's a level of trust because the communication is not there - it is based on how happy the kids were. Where are they at academically.
Coming from a bullying experience at the last school - will she settle better here - will the bullying happen again?	Communication about academics is priority.

### Group 3 - Sel

What does Dara School mean to you?	What is the public identity of Dara School?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peace of mind - I can step back, let my kids go to school and I don't need to fight for them or worry about them. I can be a "normal" parent. Sit back and let the teachers guide me about my child's education.</li> <li>That gives me and my children trust.</li> <li>It's the seed that grows into a tree that becomes their life-long education journey. I trust it.</li> <li>It means I've found a community and we're on the right path. We are in a place where we belong. Our tree can now begin to grow.</li> <li>It means that my kid gets to be himself. He doesn't have to hide under a bushel or go quiet to fit in. He can belong rather than change who is to fit the status quo.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It's a school for children with special needs. They thought that gifted meant that they had special needs</li> <li>Gifted school = exclusive = posh = specialist = Talent = Music program... special programs.</li> <li>"Gifted Label" is desired but they don't understand it. They might see it as elitist. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rumours heard before we joined</li> <li>Lots of rumours that it's really a school for twice exceptional kids. The majority of them have high needs and the classrooms are unmanageable as a result.</li> <li>That some of the teachers are teaching subjects that they are not qualified for and that's very negative. There was a maths teacher who left and the new teacher doesn't have a maths qualification.</li> <li>"None of the kids wear shoes, it's freezing and the teachers wander around in Ugg boots all day" - pre-service teacher rumour :)</li> </ul> </li> <li>There's a lot of positivity with lots of positive stories from parents at the school in "Gifted Kids Sa" and other groups on facebook :)</li> </ul>



What is your aspiration and vision for Dara School, in...

1 Year	2 Years	5 Years	10 plus years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fridge for the lunches</li><li>• Shade and places to sit outside</li><li>• Butterfly garden</li><li>• Lockers for kids stuff</li><li>• Don't put so much out there that we loose the open spaces.</li><li>• Whiteboard pain on the walls</li><li>• Connect with Hamilton Senior College and take them to Mars</li></ul>	<p>More equipment in the classrooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Science equipment</li><li>• Laptops - Own devices</li><li>• Music and Performing arts program.</li><li>• Connections with TAFE (mechanics, electrical engineering,)</li><li>• Connections with University to use equipment that you don't get at "normal" schools</li><li>• Don't grow too fast. Staggered growth plan. Need to make sure the teachers can still make the same strong connections with the kids they are now.</li><li>• Maybe (some active research to share with the community the methods and the impact)</li><li>• eSports team</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 play spaces (out the back and out the front)</li><li>• Outdoor amphitheater with shade</li><li>• Science and Engineering lab</li><li>• Maker space</li><li>• Iteration Space</li><li>• Reached capacity at current site.</li><li>• Secondary trained specialists</li><li>• Connections with industry</li><li>• Soccer Team</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A site down south and up north (3 campuses)</li><li>• Alumni program</li><li>• Established, stable school</li></ul>

What are the biggest concerns & main priorities for parents?

Before Enrolling (Application Process)	While enrolled
<p>Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• He won't get in and I'll have to home school</li><li>• What will I do if they go to Dara and they don't fit there either? Where would I go next?</li></ul>	<p>Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A lack of understanding of academic progress. No evidence of work in his books. No conversation about</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Waitlist - I assumed it went in order of application and didn't know how long it would take</li><li>• Lack of certainty.</li><li>• Moving interstate meant interim schools because of the lack of certainty around timelines. 4 weeks notice was short but good for child - bad for organising life.. Trying to look for a new job, new home etc without anything concrete from the school. A lack of support when moving interstate</li></ul> <p>Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trying to get them in ASAP</li><li>• Understand what the requirements were. Getting the tests done.</li><li>• To make sure that the schools at least appeared to meet the needs of the kids</li><li>• Talk to as many sources as possible to understand the school</li></ul>	<p>where he's at, what are his targets and how's he going towards them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reports don't teach me anything about their progress. No pastoral care comment.</li><li>• Get more when you talk to the teachers you get more information. They know the kids really well. It lets them down that that isn't communicated to the parents unless you specifically seek it out.</li><li>• Lunch. 10 mins to eat is sooooo bad. I would rather pick them up at 3:30 and let them have an hour for lunch!! Hangry boys are no fun</li><li>• Reverse i so play first. Lunch after so they're not chomping at the bit to avoid eating and play instead.</li><li>• Opportunities to connect with opportunities that are NOT in the Aus Curriculum (space/Proton microscopes/ engineering etc.)</li><li>• More celebration</li></ul> <p>Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Happy, settled</li><li>• Making good progress</li><li>• Comfortable</li><li>• Good life skills. Social Emotional Learning (RULER)</li></ul>