



Section 2

Nursery Schools Building Handbook

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BUILDING HANDBOOK

Section 2

NURSERY SCHOOLS

REVISIONS

This section of the Handbook was revised in 2009 to incorporate addenda to the text content and to the schedules of accommodation for single and double unit nursery schools.

Limited additions have been included in this latest edition (November 2024) to improve the inclusivity of nursery schools for children who may have undiagnosed special educational needs or are undergoing assessment. Whilst the number of children assessed as having SEN may be lower in pre-school, with the number of pre-school children on the SEN register remaining stable at around 11% over the last five years, many of these children will be undergoing assessment during that year.

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9INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

i. This document provides the general design requirements and inter-relationships applicable to the design of nursery schools.

ii. In conjunction with other relevant design guidance identified herein, it is intended both as a general design toolkit for schools, school authorities and their design teams and as a reference document for the evaluation of design submission by the Department of Education.

1.2 Application

i. This document applies to all nursery school construction projects for which capital funding (or grant-aid), whether in total or in part, has been approved by the Department of Education in writing.

ii. Designers are encouraged to be creative and innovative within the well-defined guidelines provided in this document.

iii. The accommodation brief for all nursery school construction projects shall be as advised to the school authorities by the Department of Education, based upon the Schedules of Accommodation in Appendices 1 and 2. Where it is proposed to construct a new school, the guidance provided in this document shall be applied in full. Where construction works are proposed for existing school buildings including extensions, conversions, refurbishments, etc a more pragmatic approach, particularly to the Schedules of Accommodation and associated areas is expected. New build portions of a project shall comply fully with this document.

1.3 Current Version

When referring to this document for guidance, it is incumbent upon school authorities, contractors and design teams to ensure that it is the most up-to-date version. The current version may be viewed on the Department's website

www.education-ni.gov.uk

1.4 Feedback

The Department of Education welcomes feedback, comments and suggestions on how to improve this document. These should be addressed to:-

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All feedback will be considered when revising the document.

2 EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 General

Nursery education has much to contribute in meeting young children's needs, be they physical, emotional, social or intellectual. The learning environment shall be designed to motivate pupils to achieve the Department's goal that every child should be happy, learning and succeeding. The learning environment, both indoor and out, should be satisfying, engaging and adaptable to changing needs. The task is to create a learning environment that gives a sense of security while providing a comfortable mixture of places for being alone and mixing with others, within a simple assortment of non-threatening, calming and stimulating spaces.

A good environment is one that is structured and organised to attract and hold the attention of all pupils, without being overtly stimulating and provide opportunities and encouragement to learn actively through and in it. The environment should be inclusive and interesting, without causing unnecessary stress or anxiety to pupils who have or may have SEN or a disability. Effective inclusion means providing suitable accommodation to all children with a diverse range of needs and abilities.

This phase of education provides for children of three and four years of age and through the planning and implementation of a suitable curriculum, their needs are met in a setting characterised by trust, support and sympathy.

The number of children with statements of Special Educational Needs, requiring access to specialist provision, has increased considerably, as has the complexity of needs. Whilst the majority of children with SEN are diagnosed at Primary School, in recent years 11% of pre-school children are diagnosed with SEN. Modest changes to increase inclusivity at this early stage in their educational development can only be helpful. The SEN Framework and legislation, including the draft SEN Regulations, the Code of Practice and the Autism Act, require schools to improve inclusion within the educational environment for children who have or may have SEN and/or a disability and to meet the needs of those children and young people as early as possible and within appropriate provisions.

2.2 Aims

Within nursery schools and classes, children are encouraged to choose freely from a range of learning activities, to develop appropriate physical and manipulative skills, to co-operate with their peers, to develop early mathematical, scientific and language abilities, to acquire appropriate habits of personal

hygiene and to develop positive attitudes to themselves and others.

2.3 Provision

Facilities for outdoor physical play, well-furnished quiet areas for less vigorous activities and generous space to encourage movement and active participation are all part of the provision which takes account of what is known about young children and how they learn.

2.4 Parental Role

Nursery schools and classes generally represent the parents' first contact with the educational system and, as such, they play an important role in establishing important links between home and school. Schools and classes should provide attractive entrance areas which are welcoming and which encourage parents and others to become more fully involved in the education of their children.

**2.5 School and
Community**

Nursery schools and classes often provide the focal point of the community and, as such, are visited by a number of people interested in the welfare of the young. Facilities should be provided which allow for the involvement of other professionals without disruption to the learning experiences of the children.

3.0 Design Guidelines

3.1 General

Although the following advice is primarily for guidance in the design of new nursery school buildings, much of the content is applicable to schemes for re-modelling surplus primary school accommodation for use by nursery classes. All of these recommendations will not necessarily be feasible in every case. The acceptability and cost effectiveness of re-modelling proposals will depend upon the nature and extent of features of the existing accommodation. Each case will be considered on its merits and the gross target cost established accordingly.

3.2 Concept

Experience has shown that the planning of the building cannot be separated from that of the play area, garden or other amenities outside. The building and its surroundings are a single unit providing educational opportunity and physical and visual links between inside and outside are essential for the work to flow naturally from one area to another. The outside, with its opportunity for freedom, exploration and experiment should complement the closer companionship, domestic scale and feeling of the interior.

3.3 Type of Provision

The provision will normally take the form of either a separate nursery school or a nursery unit attached to a primary school.

It should be noted that where a nursery school is associated with a primary school, the nursery unit must be designed as a separate stand-alone building adjacent to the main primary school building, to ensure availability to the whole community. In these situations, nursery units should be self-contained with separate parking, hard play and grass play provisions etc.

3.4 Staffing

Staff normally comprises one teacher plus a nursery assistant per playroom. In addition, there will also be some school meals and cleaning staff.

3.5 Size of Schools

Nursery schools and units are normally designed to accommodate 26 or 52 children in, respectively, single or double classes. Children may attend full-time or part-time but normally there should be no more than 50 children in attendance at any one time.

3.6 Overall Area and Gross Target Cost

The limit of internal area recommended for a new double unit school is 275 m² and 165 m² for a single unit school.

In each case, this is exclusive of school meals accommodation. The Department's gross target cost will be based upon these areas plus the area approved for a kitchen or servery.

4.0 The Site

4.1 General Arrangement Many nursery activities can take place either indoors or outdoors. The outdoor play areas are best designed as an extension to the school building. The ideal plan is one in which a covered play area immediately outside the playrooms leads onto a hard play area which in turn gives access to a grass area beyond. The grass area should be well drained to facilitate maximum use.

4.2 Supervision It is important that teaching staff are able to keep children under observation at all times from both inside and outside the building.

4.3 Orientation A sunny aspect to the playrooms and covered outdoor play area is essential. These areas should, where possible, face south or south-east.

4.4 Siting The building should be positioned on the site to give the maximum amount of garden play area with a southerly aspect. The creation of unusable, left over spaces which are difficult to maintain should be avoided. Shelter from wind is also very important and consideration should be given to improving the microclimate by forming sheltered areas, using the building, screen fences, walls, mounds, hedges and shrubs, to create a comfortable environment.

External space should promote wellbeing and facilitate and encourage children to learn through play and exploration. This can be done by providing a variety of hard and soft surfaces, natural materials, abundant vegetation, the presence of water and by varying the topography of the land, whilst maintaining accessibility for all pupils. The external space should increase environmental awareness and convey the importance of conservation and their place within the world. It should mitigate the impacts of climate change, through the choice of materials, use of shading and sustainable drainage solutions.

4.5 Site Area The site area should be sufficient to satisfactorily accommodate the building, the outside play areas and some car parking. A site area of approximately 1,500 m² is recommended for a double unit. For a single unit a site area of approximately 1,000 m² is recommended.

Vehicular access is required around all buildings, allowing for Emergency Services access as well as maintenance. Hard surface path widths are to be a minimum of 2.4 m wide for general vehicular access.

4.6 Play Areas a. Outdoor play areas

For a single unit school there should be an outdoor playing area of 250 m² minimum, of which 100 m² should be a hard play area. For a double unit school there should be an outdoor playing area of 500 m² minimum, of which 200 m² should be a hard play area. Where play spaces are adjacent to buildings, designers shall carefully consider the treatment of wall projections, windowsills, etc., particularly at children's head height.

Hidden areas which cannot be adequately supervised should be avoided and a sheltered shaded area should be provided. Creating shaded, covered areas can help reduce the ambient temperature during hot weather and provide shelter during periods of inclement weather. The balance between shaded and sunny areas is essential to maintain comfortable lighting, humidity regulation and maximum sunlight in winter, while creating shade for the summer.

b. Covered play area

The recommended minimum areas for covered play are 25 m² for a single unit school and 38 m² for a double unit school. A translucent roof should be considered so as not to reduce unduly the natural light to the playroom(s). Orientation is important, see paragraph 4.3. The Department will not grant-aid any subsequent enclosure of this open space.

c. Hard play area

A smooth surfaced level area is required. This area, together with any grass area at a higher level, should be adequately drained. It should be free of gullies, gratings, manholes or any other obstructions with the preferred gradient between 1:80 and 1:100.

Retaining walls with guard rails should be used, where required, to reduce gradient rather than a steep bank. All retaining walls are to have appropriate guarding at the top to ensure a safe working environment.

Markings on the play area, such as railway or separate cycle tracks, circles, north points etc. would add to the play potential and where possible the principal should be consulted as to the position of these.

d. Sand pit

A sand pit of approximately 12 m² in area should be provided. It should be located at the edge of the hard play area in a sheltered, easily supervised position at some distance from the nearest gullies. The sand should be contained by a wall approximately 300 mm high with rounded edges and corners. The bottom can consist of open jointed paving slabs to provide drainage and prevent children digging up soil. A cover should be provided that is easily removed and assembled, whilst in areas not subject to vandalism wire mesh stretched tightly over a frame would suffice.

Alternatively, a wire mesh enclosure with doorway could be provided. These have the advantage of leaving the sand exposed to light, sun and air.

e. Grass area

The grass area should generally be level but can be made more interesting by introducing low grade hillocks (which should be surrounded by ground free of construction), winding paths, trees and shrubs to form play areas. An area may be set aside to form a children's garden.

An outdoor tap with a removable key should be provided. The preferred maximum gradient of grass areas is 10 degrees with a maximum gradient of 25 degrees. Access gates to all fenced grass areas require a minimum 2 m clear width with 2 m wide dropped kerbs to all grass areas, for machinery access.

f. Sensory Garden

The sensory garden should be secure, self-contained and should be separated from the soft play area with appropriate fencing. Natural materials should be used and seating areas provided. The garden should be well drained, have a sunny aspect, good topsoil and be easily accessible for maintenance.

A fully wheelchair accessible area of approximately 20 m² should be provided adjacent to the external safe play area to stimulate the senses, with raised accessible planted beds, water features, lights, chimes, bird tables, shaded areas and hard and soft surfaces provided.

4.7 Landscape works

Choice of plants and shrubs should reflect physical features such as exposure, soil type and aspect. Their growth habit or form should also be suited to a particular location, have all year round interest and be attractive and welcoming. All planting schemes are to be conducted with consideration of cyclical maintenance costs going forward and should include ground cover weed suppressant materials or weed suppressant barriers.

Prickly or poisonous plants or trees should NOT be used. Tree species with limited expected height are to be selected close to boundaries and neighbouring houses. Grounds managers should be involved in landscaping plans and in particular the selection of trees and shrubs for planting.

Grassed and planted areas are visually appealing and contrast with the hard surface area and should be adequately drained and designed for ease of maintenance. Hard surface edging/platform is required around seating and fixtures along with appropriate strimming. The use of loose stone/pebbles should be restricted around the edge of new builds or beside grass areas where strimming may flick stones.

Safe access is to be provided for the maintenance of grass or planted areas e.g. if planted out behind a retaining wall with railings on top. Flower beds or planting, including trees, should be avoided close to synthetic surfaces or any loose surface materials.

- 4.8 Outdoor Equipment** In areas where vandalism is prevalent equipment should not be permanently fixed or left outside but should be kept in an external lockable store when not required.
- 4.9 Access/Safety** It is essential to safeguard children from motor traffic. Separate access routes to the school for pedestrians and vehicles are required. Parking and delivery points must be fenced off from play areas. A lockable gateway should be provided near the car park for the access of grounds maintenance equipment. In order to facilitate wheelchairs and prams the footpath to the main entrance should not incorporate steps. The access should be wide enough to allow two prams to pass.
- 4.10 Car Parking** Car parking should be provided on the basis of one bay for each member of staff (including ancillary staff) and two for visitors. A minimum of one 3.2 m wide bay should be provided and designated for the use of disabled persons.
- 4.11 Vehicular Access** Suitable set down/pick up lay-bys should be provided at the pupil entrance.
- 4.12 Security of Play Areas** The whole of the outdoor play area must be securely fenced. The fencing used should be of a type which cannot be climbed by small children and which preferably allows a view outwards. If the only consideration is the safety of children a height of approximately 1.25 m is considered adequate for fences and gates. Where applicable, any post bracing should be used externally to the play areas to deter children from climbing over the fence.
- Where a nursery unit is provided as an extension to, or an integral part of, an existing primary school, the nursery play areas should be fenced off from those for the children of primary age.
- Examples of suitable fencing are:
- a. concrete post and heavy gauge, small mesh chain link;
 - b. post and vertical board with a maximum gap of 30 mm between boards.
- 4.13 Site Security** Depending upon circumstances, adequate perimeter fencing should be provided to protect the building and the site generally.

5.0 The Building

5.1 The Concept

The building should be domestic rather than institutional in character. In conjunction with the adjoining outdoor spaces, it should provide an environment that is attractive and interesting to young children. During the majority of their time at school, children will have freedom of movement throughout the indoor and outdoor areas and consequently, a semi-open layout is likely to prove the most suitable basis of planning. Constructional details, finishes, and fittings should be selected to afford maximum durability and safety. Sharp edges and projections should be avoided. A nursery school may have disabled children on roll and their special needs should be borne in mind when designing a school. Visual links between areas are an essential provision and should be designed to permit effective through supervision.

5.2 Ceiling height

A ceiling height of 2.7 m is considered adequate and the height from floor to soffit of beams should be not less than 2.4 m. If a sloping ceiling is employed the 2.7 m height should be considered a reasonable average (rather than the minimum or the maximum).

5.3 Windows

Except where otherwise recommended the bottom glass line in windows should be approximately 800 mm from floor level. Any glazing below this level, or in and around doorways, should be in accordance with the current British Standard Code of Practice or equivalent and the Building Regulations. The BS or equivalent marking should be indicated on all safety glass.

It is essential that opening lights should not project at heights likely to cause injury. Restriction on the extent of opening will assist in this respect as well as improving security.

Window provision should be sufficient to provide satisfactory natural lighting where required and should have opening lights at high and low level to provide adequate natural ventilation, with fine adjustment.

5.4 Doors

Where internal doors and doors to the covered play area are fitted with self-closing devices, consideration should be given to the use of hold open cabin hooks (fitted above the reach of children) to facilitate free movement within and around the school. Double-action double-leaf doors should NOT be provided.

5.5 Floor Level

There should be no change of level within the building.

5.6 Mechanical and Electrical Services

It is preferable that heating systems should be designed so as to be capable of fairly immediate temperature control. Low-level

sources of heat should be guarded from interference by children and incorporate protection against burning or scorching. Alternatively, sources of heat may be located at high level or be underfloor. Control points for electrical and mechanical services must either be located in rooms to which the children do not have access or be located and/or enclosed in such a manner that they are entirely secure from interference by children. Socket outlets should be located above the reach of children.

5.7 Accommodation in General

Each nursery school should consist of the following accommodation, which is dealt with in detail in PARTS 6 to 11.

- a. Entrance/cloakroom area;
- b. Playroom accommodation, including quiet room;
- c. Children's toilet accommodation;
- d. Utility room/kitchen;
- e. Staff room;
- f. Office (in double unit schools);
- g. Storage internal;
- h. External store;
- i. Staff/disabled/visitors' toilet;
- j. Cleaner's store;
- k. Heating and electrical services.

For the categorisation of spaces for sketch plan analysis purposes, the playroom and quiet room accommodation should be considered as "usable" space.

5.8 School Meals Accommodation

This will vary according to individual requirements and may be affected by the availability of a meals service from a central kitchen or other school premises in the immediate area. Section 5 of the Handbook, School Meals Accommodation, gives further advice.

5.9 Fire fighting Appliances

Suitable appliances should be installed as recommended throughout the school. The fire safety strategy for the building should take into consideration the method of warning and evacuation that is most suitable for the building and all occupants, in accordance with BS 5588-8. Suitable warning methods should be provided in areas where individuals may be alone, such as toilets. Signage, colour coding and travel distances should be taken into account for those who may get confused, have longer reaction times or mobility issues.

5.10 Specimen Plans

Two specimen plans of a single and a double unit nursery school are attached at Appendices 3 and 4. These plans are intended only as a guide to the relationship of spaces and their areas and

other layouts will be possible. The total internal area of the single unit plan is 165 m² and the double unit plan is 275 m², both excluding school meals accommodation.

5.11 General Design

Good guidance on design approach is available from DfES Building Bulletins, especially BB87 Environment, BB90 Lighting, BB93 Acoustics, and BB101 Ventilation. This is in addition to publications from professional institutions associated with building design, construction, and specification e.g. CIBSE, RICS, RSUA, and RIBA.

5.12 Acoustics

Good acoustic conditions within individual spaces and between spaces is essential. Poor acoustic design can result in high levels of ambient noise and create noise distractions which can be disorientating or confusing for some pupils. The acoustic performance of the school shall be broadly in accordance with the DfES Building Bulletin 93.

5.13 Lighting

Lighting must consider the different needs of pupils and the potential attendance of undiagnosed SEN children, to assist with orientation, wayfinding, lip-reading and optimum visibility for sight impaired. Light fittings should be indirect, low glare, avoiding flicker and unwanted noise to minimise distraction. Adjustable, dimmable LED lighting should be installed throughout. Manual switches are preferable to control lighting levels and colour.

5.14 Daylighting

Orientation and natural shading should be considered at the outset of design to locate classrooms appropriately to avoid glare, silhouetting, reflections, shadows and interference which may cause visual confusion. Location of windows and skylights should be carefully considered.

4-5% cent minimum average daylight factor is the optimum for SEN spaces provided an acceptable uniformity ratio can be maintained. Suitable dim-out blinds should be provided to windows likely to receive direct sunlight during school hours.

5.15 Walls

Radiators, where provided at low level, shall be located within wall recesses. Radiator covers should be provided and all associated ground level pipework should be insulated/covered. Surface mounted conduit to be avoided.

Solid construction is preferred. High impact board must be specified if using dry lining/plasterboard stud partitions. Grounds required for wall fixed equipment. See room data sheets for room specific requirements.

Walls with windows should be light in colour to reduce contrast and glare from bright external light. Finishes should be muted,

and minimal to reduce distraction. Light reflectance values (LRV) should be applied between walls and other surfaces to assist the visually impaired.

5.16 Floors

Floor specification should take account of wheelchair users. Suitable LRV should be applied between floors and other surfaces for the visually impaired. Changes in colour may be used for wayfinding, however the use of bright/high contrast colour and pattern should be minimised to avoid confusion.

Variety in the texture of the floor should be considered to zone areas and sound absorbing flooring should give consideration to those children with potential sensory impairment.

5.17 Finishes generally

Avoid strong pattern, texture and contrast. Colour schemes should not over stimulate pupils with potential sensory sensitivity. Neutral, muted, earth tones should be considered. The specification for all lighting, acoustics requirements and finishes should be agreed with Sensory Support Service.

5.18 Wayfinding

The building layout should be intuitive, accessible and easily navigated and circulation routes should be free from obstructions and trip hazards. The use of visual cues, prompts, tactile trails, handrails or signage should be implemented as appropriate to assist with wayfinding throughout the building. Colour, texture, acoustics, lighting, sounds and landmark features can all assist with orientation and wayfinding. A well-designed wayfinding scheme should be direct, clear and easy to understand through consistency of design and the use of simple picture, symbols and signage.

6.0 ROOM DATA SHEETS

6.1 Entrance/Cloak Area

6.2 Playrooms and Storage

6.3 Children's Toilets and Cleaner's Store

6.4 Utility Room/Kitchen

6.5 Staff Room and Toilet Accommodatioin

6.6 Office

6.1 ENTRANCE/CLOAKROOM AREA

PLANNING	REQUIREMENTS
FUNCTION	
Activity	The arrival and departure point for children with, in many cases, mothers and prams. In some cases, the entrance/cloaks area may also be used as a play area. Changing out of, and into, outdoor clothing, including footwear. A place for parents to wait for children.
Size	Approximately 20 m ² and sufficient to provide for adequate circulation and storage facilities.
Location	At the main entrance with direct access to each playroom, the staff room, the cleaner's store, the office (in double units), the school meals accommodation and adult toilet accommodation.
Layout	A draught lobby should be provided to assist in conveying a feeling of warmth and welcome.
PERFORMANCE	
Floor Finish	A durable, easily washable finish incorporating a large mat well or mat fitted area.
Wall Finish	Smooth, plastered, with paint finish capable of being cleaned. Wall structure capable of accepting fixing for fittings.
Ceiling Finish	Light in tone, acoustically absorbent.
Windows	As required.
Doors	Entrance, staff room, office (in double units) and playroom doors should incorporate large, glazed panels at appropriate heights for adults and children. Other doors should be unglazed.
Furniture & Fittings	Coat hooks at not less than 15 cm spacing on fixed rails approximately 1 m above floor level. The spacing should be increased at internal corners. There should be one hook for each child. Hooks should be entirely free of sharp corners or edges and should not, by virtue of either their design or mounting, project in a way as to cause injury. Below each hook there should be a cubicle/cage large enough to contain shoes and wellington boots. In situations where the entrance/cloakroom area is also to be used as a play area, in the interest of safety, cloaks storage may be provided by means of a cloaks trolley. A limited amount of bench seating approximately 325 mm high is also required but should not be located under coat hooks. Limited display boarding should be provided, at adult and children's heights.
ENVIRONMENT	
Temperature	18 °C.

Ventilation	Sufficient natural ventilation is required.
Day lighting	As required.
Acoustics	Some surface absorbency desirable.
SERVICES	
Electrical	In addition to normal requirements, spotlighting over the display area is desirable. One double socket outlet is required.

6.2 PLAYROOMS AND STORAGE

PLANNING	REQUIREMENTS
FUNCTION	
Activity	This space is used for a variety of activities, active, passive, noisy and quiet, utilising a wide range of equipment and materials. Each playroom will cater for 26 children.
Size	The playroom area is based on an allowance of 2.5 m ² per child and therefore each playroom (inclusive of a quiet room of approximately 8 m ²) shall be a minimum of 65 m ² . If the quiet room is larger than 8 m ² there should be a subsequent reduction in the main playroom area.
Location	There should be direct access from each playroom to the entrance/cloaks area, the outdoor covered play area and a children's toilet area.
Layout	Each playroom should include an enclosed quiet area and whilst generally rectangular in shape it should incorporate corners and alcoves where small groups of children can play. The location of doors requires careful consideration so that these aspects can be fully achieved. It is important to restrict the number of doors leading into a playroom to a maximum of five and to ensure as far as possible that these are not located in corners. The following accommodation should not open into playrooms- kitchen/servery (SMA), staff/adult toilet, utility/kitchen room, office, staff room, cleaner's store, and electrical switch room. In a double unit school, it is desirable that the two playrooms should be capable of being combined by means of sliding/folding screens with adequate acoustic properties. Double doors should open from each playroom on to a covered outdoor play space preferably roofed by translucent sheeting. Where a change of level occurs, a ramp should be provided and access through the doorway should not be impeded by raised thresholds or door tracks.
PERFORMANCE	
Floor Finish	Should be water and stain resistant. It is important that the material should not become slippery when wet or if dry sand is spilt on it. The skirting adjacent to the sink unit should be coved and integral with the floor finish. Quiet rooms should be fully carpeted and may incorporate a step(s) at one end to provide seating for children during "story time". These steps should also be carpeted. An easily cleaned non-woven carpet or vinyl finish is generally appropriate. The specification should take account of wheelchair users and pupils who are non-ambulant (crawling or shuffling) and those who do not wear shoes. Suitable Light Reflectance Values (LRV) should be applied between floors and other surfaces for the visually impaired. Maintenance must be minimised by careful choice of colour. Changes in colour may be used for wayfinding, however the use of bright/high contrast colours and patterns should be minimised to avoid confusion. Variety in the texture of the floor should be considered to zone areas with sound absorbing flooring giving consideration to those with sensory impairment. A suitable area of clean-off zone mat-well should be provided at external entrance door to cloaks.

Wall Finish	Plaster, with a smooth finish and a paint finish capable of being easily cleaned. Wall structure should be capable of accepting fixings for shelves, furniture and fittings. Solid construction preferred. High impact board must be specified if using dry lining / plasterboard stud partitions. Grounds required for wall fixed equipment. Walls with windows should be light in colour to reduce contrast and glare from bright external light. Finishes should be muted and minimal to reduce distraction. Wall structure should be capable of accepting fixing for shelves and fittings. A tiled splashback is required at the sink unit.
Ceiling Finish	Light in tone. Sound absorption and reflection of ceiling should give consideration to those with sensory processing difficulties and hearing impairments. Spare ceiling tiles, if used, should be left in the school for future use.
Windows	Windows shall provide adequate, even daylighting and dark corners shall be avoided. The provision of high and low level opening lights will optimise natural ventilation. Window heads to be taken as close as practical to ceiling level to enhance daylight and natural ventilation provision to that recommended in BREEAM New Construction Technical Standards. A vision panel should be provided to each toilet, quiet room, entrance/cloaks and to the staff room to facilitate supervision. Requirements relating to windows are outlined in paragraph 4.3 of this Section. Windows to stores are not required. Windows should have a low sill height to allow pupils who spend time on the floor learning or playing to be able to see outside and low sill levels are required to windows overlooking covered outdoor play space. Natural light is not necessary in the store. A window shall not be placed adjacent to or above a whiteboard/interactive touchscreen.
Doors	Doors should incorporate glazing at the appropriate heights for adults and children. The adult height glazing should be as large as possible to permit pupil supervision. Doors shall be of robust and durable construction and design and with appropriate fire, acoustic and security properties and shall be in accordance with BS8300 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment. See Buildings code of practice. All doors shall have a clear minimum opening width of 800 mm. Doors to stores should be unglazed.
Ironmongery	All doors shall be lockable. Windows shall be lockable with stays used on all opening lights. All door and window ironmongery shall be of robust and durable construction and design, easy to use and safe to operate. The ironmongery shall be in accordance with BS 8300 Design of buildings and their approaches designed to meet the needs of disabled people.
Furniture & Fittings	The following should be provided:

	a. a double drainer sink unit with hot and cold water supply in each playroom. This should be at adult height as children have cloakroom sinks and have access to water trays. Storage cupboards can be provided under the sink which should not be positioned in a corner; b. fittings for window curtains in playrooms and quiet rooms; c. a small, fixed whiteboard at child height in each playroom; d. adequate provision of display boarding particularly at low level. Excessive areas of display can be confusing to young children and should be avoided. e. rows of adjustable height shelving, positioned above child head height, in the playroom and in the quiet room – total length approximately 6 m in the playroom and 3 m in the quiet room. Loose furniture and equipment should be provided outside the building contract.
Storage	Storage provision should open off each playroom. Adjustable shelving is recommended with closely spaced wide shelving for the storage of a variety of card and drawing paper. About 7 to 8 m ² should be provided for each playroom. Space should be provided under shelves for the storage of trolleys and large play equipment. An external store of at least 10 m ² is required, preferably adjacent to the covered play area, but sited so as not to impede supervision or obstruct free access to and from the playrooms. Lockable outward-opening double doors are recommended. Some adjustable shelving and a few sturdy hooks should be provided to one side only. The entrance to the store should be level with the surrounding area. A ramp, NOT steps, should be provided if necessary. Heating and windows are not required in the external store.
Fire Fighting Appliances	Firefighting appliances shall be provided and installed as required by the Building Regulations and the NI Fire and Rescue Service Board.
ENVIRONMENT	
Temperature	18 °C.
Ventilation	Some cross or transverse ventilation would be an advantage, without undesirable draughts. In accordance with Building Bulletin 101.
Day lighting	A southerly aspect to main windows of playroom is desirable. Dim-out curtains should be provided for windows of playrooms and quiet rooms.
Acoustics	Adequate absorbency to surfaces is required to take account of usually noisy environment in playrooms. To provide adequate sound insulation internal walls between playrooms, quiet rooms, staff room, offices and entrance/cloakroom area should be of solid construction.
SERVICES	
Mechanical	Hot water and potable cold mains water supplies to be provided to the sink.
Electrical	A lighting intensity of 350 lux should be provided at the working plane. Six double socket outlets (approximately one double outlet per wall) to each playroom. Two double socket outlets to each quiet room.

6.3 CHILDREN'S TOILETS AND CLEANER'S STORE

PLANNING	REQUIREMENTS
FUNCTION	
Activity	Toileting facilities and storage for the use of the cleaner.
Size	Ample circulation space is desirable and an area of 12 m ² to 16 m ² will be necessary, depending on layout.
Location	A separate toilet area should be directly accessible from each playroom and be located on an external wall. Boys' and girls' toilets are not provided separately.
Layout	For a single unit school, three WCs and five WHBs are required. In the case of a double unit, each of the two toilet areas should contain three WCs and five WHBs. In every school, one WC and one WHB in the same toilet area should be accessible by a small wheelchair. Grab rails should not be provided as these will be supplied and installed, outside the contract, when a specific need is established. In each toilet area appropriate space for a wall mounted, hinged changing table shall be provided – the table will be supplied and installed, outside the contract, when a specific need is established.
PERFORMANCE	
Floor Finish	This requires to be durable and easily cleaned.
Wall Finish	Easily cleaned finish. Tiled splash-back behind WHBs.
Ceiling Finish	Light in tone.
Windows	High level only opening vents out of reach of children. Observation window to be supplied to the playroom.
Doors	Doors should incorporate some glazing at the appropriate heights for adults and children. The adult height glazing should be as large as possible to permit pupil supervision. Cleaner's store and utility room doors should be unglazed.
Furniture & Fittings	The number of sanitary fittings should be in accordance with LAYOUT above. WC pedestals should be between 250 mm and 320 mm high. Wash basins should be fixed at a height of 550 mm to 600 mm. Urinals and drinking fountains are not required. WC cubicle partitions and doors should be 900 mm to 1 m high to facilitate supervision by staff and whilst giving privacy, are not off-putting to young children. Locks must not be fitted to doors and

	the use of door hinges that would allow fingers to be trapped should be avoided. Child hand drying may be provided using either: (a) roller towel – 5 per toilet area; (b) individual paper towels – with space for 3 paper towel dispensers and a disposal bin per toilet area. High level enclosed storage for boxes of paper towels etc; (c) individual fabric towels for each child (26), with a hook at low level spaced at 225 mm centres for towels in each toilet area. A mirror at children’s height above each wash basin. A large (Belfast type) sink should be provided.
ENVIRONMENT	
Temperature	18 °C.
Ventilation	Ventilation should be through opening windows and via mechanical extraction. Roof ventilation is not recommended.
Day lighting	As required.
SERVICES	
Mechanical	Controlled temperature warm water supply to be provided to wash basins via a local mixing valve. Each wash basin shall be provided with one suitably designed, water conservation, lever action and non-concussive blender tap, complete with an economiser outlet.
Electrical	Normal lighting requirements.
Cleaner’s Store	This must be accessed from the entrance cloaks area. It should be of sufficient size for the storage of bulk order materials and all cleaning equipment. It should have shelving, a large sink, a brush rack and a suspended mop-drying rack.

6.4 UTILITY ROOM /KITCHEN

PLANNING	REQUIREMENTS
FUNCTION	
Activity	The washing and quick drying of children's clothes and the preparation of tea/coffee for staff and simple snacks for children.
Size	8 m ² should suffice.
Location	On external wall with access via the staff room.
PERFORMANCE	
Floor Finish	Should be durable and easily cleaned. Nonslip impervious vinyl flooring is generally appropriate. Maintenance must be minimised by careful choice of colour.
Wall Finish	Smooth, plastered, with paint finish capable of being cleaned and with tiled upstand/splash-back to worktop and sink.
Ceiling Finish	Light in tone.
Windows	Where provided windows should provide adequate and even daylighting. The provision of high and low level opening sashes will optimise natural ventilation.
Doors	Doors shall be of robust and durable construction and design and with appropriate fire, acoustic and security properties and shall be in accordance with BS8300 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment. See Buildings code of practice. All doors shall have a clear minimum opening width of 800 mm. A small, suitably glazed, DDA compliant vision panel shall be provided in the door leading to the kitchenette.
Furniture & Fittings	Worktop along one long wall with a single drainer sink with hot and cold water supply and associated high and low level kitchen cupboarding. Height preferably adjustable with clear space underneath for wheelchair access. Taps should not be within reach of small children and spring-loaded press-down taps should NOT be used. Cupboards may be provided under the sink unit. A small cupboard unit and worktop may be provided as an extension to the sink unit, but extensive built-in furniture should NOT be provided. Space should be left for a fridge and domestic washing machine/tumble drier, which will be provided outside the building contract. Tall cupboards along one wall for the storage of towels, dry clothes, cleaning equipment, materials and cleaning agents etc., (for use by the teaching staff). A suspended mop-drying rack.

Ironmongery	All doors shall be lockable. Windows shall be lockable with stays used on all opening lights. All door and window ironmongery shall be of robust and durable construction and design, easy to use and safe to operate. The ironmongery shall be in accordance with BS 8300 Design of buildings and their approaches designed to meet the needs of disabled people.
ENVIRONMENT	
Temperature	18 °C.
Ventilation	Ventilation should be through opening windows and via mechanical extraction. Ventilation, CO₂ control and overheating shall be designed in accordance with statutory requirements and the criteria within Building Bulletin 101. CO₂ monitors to be provided to ensure that users are aware of the air quality. Tumble driers and combination washer/driers shall be vented directly to the external atmosphere. Ventilation design should not compromise acoustic performance.
Day lighting	Good natural lighting with even distribution shall be provided.
SERVICES	
Mechanical	Hot water and potable cold water supplies to be provided to the sink.
Electrical	Normal lighting requirements. Three double socket outlets. Extract fan.

6.5 STAFF ROOM

PLANNING	REQUIREMENTS
FUNCTION	
Activity	To function as the administrative base for a single unit school, a room for staff to relax and where parents can feel welcome to discuss matters with them.
Size	15 m ² for a single and double unit school.
Location	Designed to have direct access to the main entrance. In a single unit school consideration could be given to direct access to the playroom, although this will reduce the provision of wall space in the playroom for display and storage purposes. Convenient access to staff toilet and cloaks accommodation.
PERFORMANCE	
Floor Finish	A carpet is desirable.
Wall Finish	Smooth, plastered, with paint finish. Wall structure should be capable of accepting fixing for fittings.
Ceiling Finish	Light in tone.
Windows	External windows plus an observation window to the playroom.
Doors	Entrance, staff room, office (in double units) and playroom doors should incorporate large, glazed panels at appropriate heights for adults and children. Glazed to entrance/cloakroom area.
Furniture & Fittings	Adjustable height shelving, with a total length of approximately 4 m. A first-aid cabinet at high level. Limited display boarding. Curtain fittings. Mirror. Loose furniture comprising desk, easy chairs, dining table and chairs. A small cupboard and lockable storage for personal belongings will be supplied outside the building contract.
ENVIRONMENT	
Temperature	18 °C.
Ventilation	Normal ventilation.
Day lighting	Normal daylighting.
SERVICES	
Mechanical	Hot and cold mains water supply.
Electrical	A lighting intensity of 350 lux should be provided at the working plane. Four double socket outlets.
Telephone	A telephone point is required.
STAFF TOILET AND CLOAKS	This should be accessible from the entrance area for the use of visitors/parents as well as staff. It should not open off a staff room,

ACCOMMODATION	playroom, or kitchen. <u>Single unit Schools</u> One WC and one WHB which are suitable for disabled people, is normally considered adequate. <u>Double unit Schools</u> One WC and one WHB suitable for disabled people, for the use of visitors and parents. In separate accommodation, one WC and one WHB for the use of staff. A vanity unit, mirror, and shelf. Cloaks provision.
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6.6 OFFICE

PLANNING	REQUIREMENTS
FUNCTION	
Activity	To function as the administrative base for a double unit school.
Size	8 m ² to 10 m ² .
Location	Direct access to the main entrance – supervision of the main entrance should be possible via an external window and an internal observation window.
PERFORMANCE	
Floor Finish	Carpet is desirable.
Wall Finish	Smooth, plastered, with paint finish. Wall structure should be capable of accepting fixing for fittings.
Ceiling Finish	Light in tone.
Windows	External window plus an observation window to main entrance.
Doors	Glazed to entrance/cloakroom area.
Furniture & Fittings	Adjustable height shelving, total length approximately 4 m. Display boarding. Loose furniture comprising desk, chairs and storage cupboards will be supplied outside the building contract.
ENVIRONMENT	
Temperature	21 °C.
Ventilation	Normal ventilation.
Day lighting	Normal daylighting.
SERVICES	
Electrical	A lighting intensity of 350 lux should be provided at the working plane. Four double socket outlets.
Telephone	A telephone point is required.