

Innovative learning environments - Form follows function

[musical interlude to 00.20]

Bruce, Principal, Halswell Primary: We went through a process of designing and building a new school. Our vision for the design was to try and create a flexible set of buildings that could be used in a variety of ways and the design that we came up with is unique to this school and we're very proud of it.

Tracey, Teacher: The students are much more focused and working more collaboratively now, because they're not restricted to just a chair and a desk. They can actually choose where they want to work.

Annie, Teacher: I definitely think it's making learning more fun. The children just love coming to school and they talk about their lovely new school.

Lisa, Teacher: We had a *great* time choosing our furniture. The most popular pieces of furniture are these chairs and the round table where the children can all sit on the soft chairs together.

Jimmy: I like it cos there's blue and yellow; very *calm*.

Sam: It's a good working space cos you've got all this space; lots of people can sit on it.

Tessa: They're really comfy.

[musical interlude 1.15 to 1.36]

Mike, Principal, Waimairi Primary: We're looking forward to the next few years, because it's going to deliver us newer and renewed facilities. While there are universal design principles, *how* they are brought to life is very unique and each school brings those to life in different ways.

We offered physical meetings; we had an online component for parents who preferred to contribute in that way, to share ideas. All of this is very, very important because it's millions of dollars we're dealing with.

The reason we needed to remove walls was that much of the prototyping that we wanted to do involved one or more teachers working collaboratively with each other and with walls and doors *between* the rooms, it was clearly a barrier.

Melanie, Mum: We could see that the school wanted to prototype their spaces before their next rebuild. We put our hands up and said, we've got some design experience and we're parents, so we've got a vested interest in this whole process - and would you like a hand?

Nina, Mum and Designer: Testing of furniture and spaces I think's really important to the future design, because it means that it's designed with real purpose for learning.

Melanie, Mum: They wanted to create a feeling of like being around a campfire.

Anzu: They're a seat and they're very comfortable and they're also a table, which is quite fun.

John: It makes me tall, so I can see you.

Mike, Principal, Waimairi Primary: Design is a process. Some ideas of what you can do are developed and then they're tested. We won't be scratching our heads wondering how to work the new spaces - we'll be moving in saying, finally we've got something which honours the way we like to teach and the way we know children learn.

Ruth, Deputy Principal, Te Waka Unua Primary: Our school's had to stay open while we are doing our plans for rebuilding and we've had to just use every available space. This was once our hall and we've had to make this into a learning environment. It's given us a chance to try things out. We've got new spaces that have been built for the collaborative model.

Katie, Teacher: It was designed to be used with so many kids, so all the classrooms are slightly offset, which means the noise isn't a problem for us. We've found that the children are a lot more engaged in this block. I think it's a whole combination of all the components of the block coming together. They can choose where they work; they're getting taught at their level. They also choose who they work with, so you're not forcing kids to work with just one set of four children in your one class all day. So they aren't fighting with each other - they're working really well and they're really excited to *be* here and to be in this block.

Arshdeep: It's my favourite spot to sit and read a book.

Holly: When we make it all into a big desk, it turns out like a caterpillar.

Katie, Teacher: That's called the green monster. It was really fun for the kids to go and sit on it. They love it, so they get more enthusiastic about whatever you're doing, just because they're sitting on an exciting, big seat.

Ruth, Deputy Principal, Te Waka Unua Primary: I'm really looking forward to going and seeing the Halswell model, which is a new building that's purpose-built. We'll be able to use some of those ideas hopefully and even maybe adapt what we're doing.

Oh, it's great: just bright and fresh and modern. And you get lots of break-off spaces - that's what I'm looking forward to when we do this with our school.

[musical/action interlude 5.11 to END]

Recording ENDS: 5.46