

Education Vision and Design Brief

Option 1

Whytrig Middle & Astley Community High Schools

December 2021



Northumberland
County Council



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1. Background, Context and Vision – Seaton Valley Federation

1.1 Profile – numbers

Whytrig Middle School (WMS)	Figure
Number on Roll (current)	281
Projected NOR/Design for	360
Age Range	9-13 (Y5-Y8)
Pupil Admission Number (PAN)	90
Pupils with EHC Plan (2021, national 2019)	4.6% (national 1.7%)
Pupils with SEN Support (2021, national 2019)	15.3% (national 10.8%)
Pupil Premium Pupils/FSM (2021, national 2019)	30.2% (national 14.1%)
English as additional language (2021, national 2019)	1.8% (national 16.9%)

Astley Community High School (ACHS)	Figure
Number on Roll (current)	560
Projected NOR/Design for	650 + 10 place ARP
Age Range	13-18 (Y9-Y13)
Pupil Admission Number (PAN)	150
Post 16/6 th Form	200
Pupils with EHC Plan (2021, national 2019)	2.5% (national 1.7%)
Pupils with SEN Support (2021, national 2019)	6.8% (national 10.8%)
Pupil Premium Pupils/FSM (2021, national 2019)	25.4% (national 14.1%)
English as additional language (2021, national 2019)	1.4% (national 16.9%)

Many colleagues working at WMS and ACHS support learners at both Astley and Whytrig, so these numbers are included here to give an indication of the total number of staff on site. The support staff number includes all teaching assistants, admin, technicians, cleaning and catering colleagues.

WMS and ACHS	Figure
Number of Teaching Staff (2021/22)	58, 52.32 FTE
Number of Support Staff (2021/22)	124, 45.61 FTE
Projected number of Teaching Staff (when full capacity)	69, 62.65 FTE
Projected number of Support Staff (when full capacity)	147, 54.54 FTE

There is also a 10-place additionally resourced provision associated with Astley, which is for young people who are diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. This provision was only recently added to the site in the form of a large temporary mobile unit, for first use in September 2021. Further details about the ARP are provided in section 4.11.

ARP staff	Figure
Number of Teaching Staff (2021/22)	1
Number of Support Staff (2021/22)	4
Projected number of Teaching Staff (when full capacity)	2
Projected number of Support Staff (when full capacity)	10

1.2 Context

Seaton Valley Federation was formed in 2009 and is made up of three schools in the Seaton Delaval area of Northumberland. Seaton Sluice Middle School predominantly serves the villages of Seaton Sluice, New Hartley and Seghill, whilst Whytrig Middle School and Astley Community High School are co-located about three miles away from Seaton Sluice.

The two schools on Elsdon Avenue, Whytrig and Astley, are the main focus for this project, although some consideration is also being given to the viability of including Seaton Sluice Middle School in the project.

Astley Community High School was built over time between 1945 and 1966, occupying the Elsdon Avenue Site. Whytrig Middle School was based nearby but moved onto the Elsdon Avenue Site in 2014, occupying an unused building (block C). The capacity of Whytrig increased in 2017 when an additional modular building was added and following this, the PAN was increased to be a three-form entry middle school. A further two temporary classrooms have also been added to the site in 2021 to accommodate the growing Whytrig numbers.

Northumberland County Council has a mixture of two-tier and three-tier schools. The Seaton Delaval area operates a three-tier system and the Governing Body of the Seaton Valley Federation (SVF) are keen to continue with this. Whytrig is a middle school, accommodating pupils from ages 9 to 13 (years 5 to 8); Astley is a high school with young people from ages 13 to 18 (years 9 to 13).

It is important that each school retains its identity moving forward, with Astley and Whytrig each having separate entrances and some separate learning facilities. They will, however, also have several shared spaces available to the learners to maximise the benefits of having co-located schools.

The Executive Headteacher of the SVF was originally appointed as Headteacher of Astley High School in 2012. In 2014, the Exec Head role was created to oversee both Whytrig and Astley and in 2016, this role further expanded to include overseeing Seaton Sluice Middle School.

Each school has their own Head of School and there is a Business Manager who works across the Federation. Other than the Heads of School, the senior leadership team across Astley and Whytrig is fairly small, consisting of an assistant head for Astley who leads the sixth form, a new assistant head who leads the ARP and SEND, and four associate assistant members across both schools. The associate colleagues are seconded to the SLT from the staff for a two-year period. They continue with their teaching and other duties but have an opportunity to be involved with the SLT and to develop themselves professionally.

Whytrig Middle School has just had an extremely positive Ofsted Inspection in November 2021, with overall effectiveness being deemed to be 'good', but with behaviour and attitudes described as 'outstanding'. This was reinforced throughout the report with adjectives such as exemplary, exceptional, respectful and supportive being used frequently. It is also noted that Y7 and Y8 students benefit from having specialist teaching from high school staff.

Following the 'good' full inspection for Astley in January 2016, with reference being made to the transformation of the quality of educational provision at the school, a further monitoring inspection took place in November 2019 and the school continues to be graded as 'good'. Relationships in the classroom were noted as being excellent and the staff love working at Astley because they are really able to teach.

Both Schools have an incredibly calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the day, including at breaks and lunchtime and this is supported by the absence of any ‘bells’ at lesson changeover, which works very well across the site. The Schools are interested in exploring the possibility of having some sort of tannoy system, but they are keen to ensure that the ‘lack of changeover bells’ continues.

The public library in Seaton Delaval, Seaton Delaval Community Library currently operates from the ground floor of Astley High School on one day each week, although Customer Services for the area has now relocated elsewhere. The library moved from its previous location in 2013 following some reorganisation of public services for Northumberland County Council. The arrangement currently works well, with the school utilising the first floor of the library throughout the day, with the ground floor public library opening on a Monday from 0900 until 1700. It is uncertain whether this library provision will continue in the new development.

Youth Services for Northumberland County Council also used to have a base on the current high school site, within the Astley Sixth Form Centre, running a youth club from there, as well as supporting school staff with the delivery of some personal, social and health education. Youth Services have now relocated, although some of their staff do still occasionally support with PSHE.

There is a very popular swimming pool on site, which is used extensively by the community and other local schools including Seaton Sluice First School, Cramlington Primary and New Hartley First School. The priority for use of the swimming pool during the school day is of course to support the PE and health curriculum at Whytrig and Astley, but the timetable for the pool is designed to support the requests from other schools as far as is possible and reasonable.

The Schools have a reputation for being inclusive and will often take learners onto their roll who are struggling in other school settings. To this end, the site was identified by Northumberland County Council as an appropriate location for an Additional Resourced Provision, accommodating up to ten young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This provision opened in September 2021 in a new temporary modular building on the site.

1.3 Vision, Ethos and Values

‘Small enough to care, big enough to deliver a positive impact.’

Vision

The vision for the three schools in the Seaton Valley Federation is simple, yet clear:

- *To be exceptional in everything that we do*
- *To ensure that everyone attends a school where they are safe, happy, successful and have lots of opportunities*
- *To provide a positive learning environment which allows everyone to achieve their potential*

Ethos

All three schools in the Seaton Valley Federation share the same ethos, which has three main themes:

- *To know every child academically and pastorally as a complete young person*
- *To treat everyone and everything with respect*
- *To strive for everyone to be as good as they can be and to be proud of doing well*

The Federation puts teaching and learning at the heart of every lesson. Staff receive regular training to ensure they are always improving, and this has an impact on the lessons they teach. The Schools are medium sized schools and because of that they are far more able to respond to an individual's needs compared to bigger schools. They pride themselves on the level of support that both the young people and their parents or carers receive.

Academically, all students are closely monitored to identify if they are making the progress they should be. If they are not, interventions are put in place to rectify the situation.

Values

Schools in the Seaton Valley Federation share a set of core values. It is expected that all members of the school community will demonstrate these core values including students, staff, volunteers, governors and parents.

It is expected that all members of the school community will:

- develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
- respect the laws of England and will know right from wrong and ensure their actions reflect this;
- accept responsibility for their behaviour;
- show initiative and contribute in a positive way to the school community, the local community and society in general;
- show respect for each other and all other people;
- show tolerance and respect for different cultures and traditions and will never act in such a way that these cultures or traditions are abused or attacked;
- show respect for the rule of democracy and respect for the democratic principles of England.

Each school considers how best to communicate and embed these values for their pupils

1.4 Community Use

The community use of the facilities on site has been varied over the years, ranging from guitar groups and basket weaving to baking classes and sports. In 2013, the Federation made the decision to stop all night classes, other than sports, as they hadn't been as successful as originally hoped, and it was no longer financially viable to run them.

More recently however, following several enquiries from a variety of organisations, the decision was made to increase the number of activities available, thus increasing the community offer outside of school hours. This has been incredibly successful with the swimming pool now booked out every evening and weekend for swimming lessons, as well as being used by diving clubs and for lifeguard training. There are over 600 people use the pool each week.

Similarly, the sports hall is booked for activities every evening until at least 9pm, as well as on weekends, with over 500 people making use of this facility. The gym and main hall are also booked regularly, including for use by England Netball, and the pitches are well used on a weekend.

Organisations and groups currently using the available facilities include football development groups, Northumbria Scuba Divers, Fifth Point Divers, Seaton Valley Sports, Cramlington Juniors FC, Dinkies, North Shields Triathlon Club and Above the Water Swim School. Pre pandemic, there were also a

number of other groups using the main hall for activities such as Slimming World and Skinny Pigs and it is hoped that these will start again in the coming months.

There are a number of sports camps that also run throughout the summer holidays focussing on a variety of sports including football coaching, gymnastics, dance and trampolining.

In addition to 'out of hours' community use, the swimming pool is also booked during the day by other first and middle schools in the area. The school timetables are designed to accommodate this. The Schools would like to be able to offer the pool to the local community for use during the day when not in use to support the curriculum, but this is not currently feasible due to the way that the pool is accessed on site as safeguarding would be an issue. It would be desirable to revisit this during the project.

Regular enquiries are made about available facilities to support dance groups and performances, including from the Seaton Delaval Arts Centre, but at present these cannot be accommodated on site because of the limited performing arts spaces and resources. This is something that will change in the future in the new buildings.

Seaton Delaval Community Library is based next to the reception area for Astley High School and is available for the general public to access one day a week from 0900 until 1700. Pre pandemic some nursery groups used to make use of this facility during the day with some sixth form students involved with reading to these groups. Although this provision has again been offered to the nursery groups, so far, they have not yet returned. It is anticipated that this will recommence in the future.

The community library is unlikely to form part of the project moving forward, as it is looking to relocate to another venue, but this has not yet been confirmed.

2. Whytrig Middle School

2.1 Curriculum and Organisation

Pupils in each year of Whytrig follow the National Curriculum, with separate learning sessions for each subject throughout the week. The school has a one-week timetable and all learners have one hour of personal, social and health education every week.

Homework at Whytrig is based around the completion of half termly projects, with an understanding that this is an exciting and creative way to get children working independently at home, at their own pace and where possible, choosing their own activities to do. During the year, learners are also expected to complete a variety of other smaller homework tasks including exercises to reinforce skills already learned in class, extended writing, investigations, and revision or learning of spellings, times tables or new vocabulary. Each pupil is given a reading diary which is signed by parents or carers when their child reads at home. The more signatures gathered, the more merits the pupils earn.

Learners in Whytrig have an opportunity to attend a residential during their time at the School and there are also a number of trips which run jointly with Astley to Valencia and France. In addition, other trips for Whytrig are arranged on an annual basis to London and various other locations.

There are several extra-curricular activities available for key stage 2 and 3 learners, including a breakfast club which runs in the food technology room. Some Y9 students continue to access the breakfast club for a short time once they have started Astley, which helps them to settle into the high

school setting more easily. Several Whytrig students also join with Astley learners on a Friday after school if they wish to be involved with any of the extra performing arts clubs such as choir or performance. These groups of students plan and run many of the performances for both the middle and high schools.

There is no alternative education provision for any young people at Whytrig, although on occasion some learners attend the Pupil Referral Unit for a short-term placement.

Shape of Day

The shape of the day at Whytrig is quite usual for a middle school, with pupils gathering in the external play areas from around 0830, before moving into the building ready for their registration session.

Time	Activity
0820	Breakfast Club
0830	Enter Yard
0850	Line Up
0855 – 0905	Registration
0905 – 1005	Lesson 1
1005 – 1105	Lesson 2
1105 – 1120	Break
1120 – 1210	Lesson 3
1210 – 1305	Lunch
1305 – 1405	Lesson 4
1405 – 1505	Lesson 5
1505 – 1530	Assembly/Reading

Key Stage 2

Pupils in Y5 and Y6 at Whytrig are based in their ‘home base’ for the vast majority of their time in school, with their designated class teacher. Other than at social times, they usually only leave their base to access their designated art and design space, the shared technology and sports facilities, and occasionally Y6 may access a science lab.

The curriculum for KS2 consists of English, maths, art, design and technology, humanities (geography and history), science, IT, French, music, RE, PSHE and PE.

For the majority of lessons and subjects, learners work in their tutor groups and with the same teacher. For PE, art and technology, however, specialist staff lead the sessions with each group. Most music lessons currently happen in the classrooms for key stage 2 and whilst this works reasonably well for general music, it would be helpful if there was a more suitable space available for some of the larger instrument activities, such as when a whole class has a cello lesson. A dedicated hall for Whytrig would support this.

Every learner has at least one hour of English and maths every day where the whole year group is timetabled together for this to enable ability groups to be formed, should this be appropriate.

Whytrig has previously experimented with incorporating the International Primary Curriculum for key stage 2, which is a more thematic and creative curriculum focusing on English, history, geography,

science, technology, IT and art. Whilst some aspects of this approach have continued within the classroom, the current approach is more traditional.

Whytrig would like to be able to further develop the practical elements of their curriculum at key stage 2 and to support this, it would be helpful for these learners to have easy access to water, probably just with the inclusion of a sink in each learning space.

Another area of focus for the School is the development of outdoor learning to support the curriculum and it would therefore be very beneficial if the Y5 and Y6 areas were directly connected with the external learning spaces.

Key Stage 3

Pupils in Y7 and Y8 at Whytrig work in their 'home base' for a much smaller amount of their curriculum time, following a much more 'secondary like' model. They access specialist teachers for almost all of their subjects and as well as using the dedicated middle school specialist areas for art and science, they will also access the shared design and technology, music and ICT facilities.

Students in KS3 follow a standard curriculum consisting of maths, English, geography, history, PSHE, science, music, IT, PE, art, design and technology, French and RE. Technology lessons are always double sessions and happen in the Whytrig design technology space. Astley students also access these design technology spaces for food and resistant materials lessons, but Whytrig students have a separate entrance to this workshop.

Y7 and Y8 learners use the music facilities within Astley to support this area of the curriculum which works well, and this will continue in the new facilities with a shared suite of music spaces. It would, however, also be helpful to have a space within Whytrig which could support some aspects of music for these young people, such as a dedicated hall space. Other performing arts, in the form of dance mainly, happen as part of the PE curriculum and similarly it will be helpful to have a dedicated space within Whytrig to support this.

KS3 students are grouped into ability sets for English and maths, but all other subjects happen mainly in their mixed ability tutor groups.

Staffing

There are dedicated teachers for the Y5 and Y6 groups in Whytrig who work with groups of these learners for all subjects except PE, art and technology.

There is a specialist PE teacher for Whytrig who works with all groups in Y5 to Y8, as well as a dedicated art and technology colleague who similarly works with all learners. There is also a dedicated science teacher for Y7 and Y8 who is based in the science lab for Whytrig, and an English teacher who works with students from Y6 to Y8.

In addition to these colleagues, there are a number of staff who work with students from Y7 and Y8 in Whytrig, but also then work with older students from Y9 to Y13 in Astley. The faculty leaders from Astley work closely with Whytrig staff for Y7 and Y8 to support the development of the curriculum for these years.

2.2 Teaching and Learning

The approach to teaching and learning at Whytrig is quite varied depending on the key stage and the subject area. For key stage two, the model is very primary focussed with pupils staying with their teachers for the majority of their subjects. When students move into Y7 they start to have quite a different experience in terms of their day to day school life, moving around the buildings more and engaging in a more traditional approach to learning.

The school would like to improve the opportunities for practical learning for all of the students and the introduction of some wet areas for key stage two will support this. If the resources are easily accessible for staff, then they are more likely to develop their confidence in using them.

Sharing good practice is now much more common, both within Whytrig and across the two schools. Colleagues from Astley and Whytrig work together on a Wednesday afternoon to plan subject specific learning for the middle school learners. There are English and maths lead colleagues for KS2 and they work very closely with the heads of faculty for these subjects from Astley, as well as with the Y5 and Y6 teachers in Whytrig.

Staff spend time in each other's lessons observing good practice, learning from each other and supporting each other in their professional development. There is now a much greater culture of seeking out and implementing new and different strategies to improve the teaching and learning experience for the young people. There is some cross-school observation happening currently, but the schools would like to see more colleagues observing or working with colleagues from different key stages.

Some staff have been working at Whytrig for an extended period of time, perhaps more than ten years, and these colleagues are encouraged to go and spend some time with another school, either locally or further afield, to see how other schools work with different cohorts of learners. As well as often reassuring colleagues that they are doing things well, the purpose of these visits is to look at different practice elsewhere to see how they can further develop themselves and their teams.

Professional development for staff is focused on need and where it is felt that a colleague could benefit from developing their questioning technique, for example, then another colleague will be identified who can support this development. Some new career pathways groups have also started this year for staff from both Whytrig and Astley, where potential middle leaders, for example, will come together for some professional development and learning. The aim is to help them move forward with their careers as and when appropriate.

Action research has become much more common place, with every member of staff taking part in an action research project recently. These ranged from a focus on learning starter activities, to using older students to listen to key stage 2 learners reading, to using a 'support and challenge' technique rather than differentiation. The vast majority of colleagues embraced their projects and the outcomes and impact have been shared with staff from across both of the schools.

In recent years, Whytrig was part of the NAHT Aspire programme, focusing on all aspects of teaching and learning, but particularly raising standards and the use of data to support this. At the centre of the NAHT Aspire model is the EdisonLearning Five Strand Design. Developed from international research, the five strands include leadership, pedagogy and curriculum, learning environment, assessment for

learning and student and family support. The school found this very beneficial, and it has helped them move forward with many aspects of learning and teaching.

The role of learning support colleagues, especially learning support assistants, is key in Whytrig, with these colleagues noted as being highly effective in the last Ofsted report. It is clear that these colleagues are valued across the organisation.

Learning and teaching outside of the classroom is varied at Whytrig, with some staff feeling much more confident and able to engage with their young people outside than others. The school would like to see this develop further and is considering introducing aspects of Forest Schools to the curriculum for the younger learners. This is not just about creating learning environments outside of the formal learning spaces but is equally about the development of staff to ensure that they see the benefits of and are confident in their delivery of the curriculum outside the boundaries of their usual indoor learning space. Creating direct connections between internal and external spaces in the new facilities will encourage this development moving forward.

2.3 Learning Technologies

The use of technology to support learning in Whytrig has changed quite a lot over the last two years, in part due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Additional resources were provided to support on-line learning for students whilst working from home and some of the recent Coronavirus catch up premium has been used to purchase some more Chromebooks for use in school.

The quality and strength of the network connectivity on site has also improved recently, which has made for a much smoother use of the learning technologies. As well as the young people, the staff have really grown in confidence with their use of and approach to using the technology, particularly around Google Classroom.

There isn't a dedicated ICT suite for Whytrig learners to use, although Y7 and Y8 students do access the ICT facilities in the World of Work faculty in Astley when required. There are now three trollies of Chromebooks and one trolley of laptops available for use at Whytrig, as well as a set of iPads, but these have been used with varying levels of success so far, particularly with the younger pupils in Y5 and Y6. This had been mainly due to the quality of the internet connection and related infrastructure in the current buildings and whilst with a change of provider this has improved, it is anticipated that this will be further improved in the future.

There will not be a requirement for a dedicated ICT suite in Whytrig moving forward as key stage two pupils will use mobile technology and key stage three students will use the shared ICT rich spaces across the site to support their curriculum, as well as the much improved mobile technology in the middle school.

Each classroom includes an interactive whiteboard or similar and these are used well by colleagues in Whytrig, with learners using them for parts of their lessons. The School would like learners across both key stages two and three to have access to a greater variety of technologies to support their learning.

The Federation has recently explored the concept of 'Bring Your Own Devices (BYOD)' to school for all three of their schools. This happens more in Astley than in Whytrig currently, mainly due to the age of the learners and the technologies that they may have available to them. With an increased amount of technology now available to learners in school, there is no desire at present to look again at BYOD for Whytrig pupils.

As with many schools in recent years, Whytrig has moved away from having a school VLE, and instead make very good use of Google Classroom. This is something that the staff at the school have fully embraced and there are regular training and developmental sessions around this, where staff from both schools share good and new practice with other colleagues. This development has been further expedited because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Federation uses Bromcom as their management information system, and staff access to this outside of school is now much improved with all staff provided with a laptop.

2.4 Pastoral Care and Organisation

Each year group in Whytrig has a student progress leader who also predominantly teaches that year group. They oversee the two or three tutor groups in each year group. The tutors/class teachers for Y5 and Y6 stay with Y5 and Y6 each year and do not move up with the learners. The tutors for Y7 and Y8, however, stay with their tutor group for the two years and help them prepare for the next stage of their learning with their move up to the high school. There is also a pastoral support worker who works across all years in the middle school.

There is a house system in the middle school with young people being placed into a house upon arrival in Y5 and staying with this house until they move up to Astley at the end of Y8. There are four houses - Blake (blue), Delaval (green), Hasting (red), Seaton (yellow). The houses are mainly used for interhouse sporting events, merit points and there is a dedicated display area for each house. Y8 students have an opportunity to become a House Captain.

Every tutor group in the School starts each day with their tutor for a short 10-minute registration session, before either starting their formal learning with their class teacher or moving out to a different space for their first lesson. At the end of each day, all tutor groups spend a longer 25-minute session together. Some of this time is used for an assembly once a week for each year group, usually held in the gym. There are also two full school assemblies held each week in the main school hall, which is a shared hall with Astley High School. The remaining tutor sessions are dedicated to reading with all groups.

Assemblies are held at the end of the day currently because this is the only time when the main hall is available for Whytrig to use. This is not ideal as the School would like to be able to look at having larger assemblies in the morning time, or at least have the option of using a larger space throughout the day, without having to worry if it is being used by Astley or for break or lunch.

Following the Coronavirus pandemic, Whytrig have reintroduced a School Counsellor to the team to support the learners. This colleague currently spends one day a week at Whytrig, but it is anticipated that this may increase in the coming years.

2.5 Support for Learning/SEND

The SEND team for Whytrig consists of the SENDCo, the SEN support officer, a number of band 2 and 4 teaching and learning assistants, and some level 2 and 3 apprentice colleagues who are working towards becoming learning assistants. This team work very closely together and also with teaching staff in the School to ensure that learning is carefully planned, and appropriate support is available for those learners who need it and are entitled to it.

The School would like to be able to facilitate more cross-school working between SEN colleagues in both Whytrig and Astley and it is hoped that this will be facilitated through this project. The Federation has recently appointed a new assistant head who has overall responsibility for SEND and the new ARP provision.

Support for learning is planned throughout the day, with the majority of support taking place within mainstream sessions where support colleagues work with individuals or small groups of learners. This can regularly involve small groups of students working together outside of the classroom, practising a key skill, with some more focussed input and it would be ideal if there were some more appropriate areas for these activities to take place, perhaps in a breakout area just outside of the classroom, particularly for Y5 and Y6.

There are a number of planned intervention activities which take place in the SEND hub, either with individuals or with small groups and it will be important that this is able to continue moving forward. These include some withdrawal support during lessons, additional social support at break and lunch times, and extra intervention sessions such as reading and handwriting during the final 25-minute period of each day when other pupils may be taking part in an assembly or tutor session.

There is a team of external colleagues who come into school to work with any students who have a hearing impairment. This work currently takes place in an office, but in the future, it is anticipated that there will be a more appropriate setting for this work.

Very occasionally a middle school pupil who is really struggling with their mainstream setting might have access to the 'Bungalow', which is used predominantly by Astley students. Given that the 'Bungalow' is likely to no longer exist in the new development and will instead be the Astley SEND hub in the main building, this circumstance will no longer arise.

There is a part time science technician in Whytrig who supports the science teacher in getting practical activities ready for lessons.

3. Astley Community High School

3.1 Curriculum and Organisation

The curriculum at Astley has moved away from its historic maths and computing specialism, focusing on more traditional pathways for the young people. There is still some evidence of the old specialism within the buildings, particularly in relation to the amount of ICT facilities that have been available over the years.

The performing arts are an area which the school is very keen to develop moving forward. Both staffing and lack of suitable facilities have become an issue over time, with no drama or dance appearing on the curriculum for any year group. The fairly recent appointment of an excellent music colleague has seen a significant increase in the number of students opting for the subject at key stage four and it is hoped that this will be able to carry through to key stage five, especially with the development of fit for purpose facilities. In anticipation of this development, Astley will start to offer a music based performing arts course from next year.

Creative media used to make an appearance on the curriculum, but the introduction of both the English Baccalaureate and the progress 8 measures in recent years have seen this subject disappear

completely. The school are not considering reintroducing media at this stage but would like to concentrate their efforts on the development of the performing arts and also technology.

Technology is a subject that has had some difficulties at Astley, in terms of staffing but mainly in terms of the very poor and limited facilities that are available to the school. This is another curriculum area that the school are wanting to significantly improve as part of the project.

It is also hoped that English language can be reintroduced in the future to the key stage five curriculum, as well as increasing the uptake in French. Ideally it will also be possible to introduce other modern foreign languages. The most recent Ofsted inspection also supports the development of MFL in the curriculum moving forward to help increase the number of students following and achieving the English Baccalaureate qualification.

All students in Y9 to Y11 have an entitlement to PSHRE, with Y9 having three hours each fortnight and KS4 learners having one hour a fortnight. The school are also looking to have a number of 'drop down' days in the future, where particular aspects of the PSHRE curriculum can be focused on such as sex education or spiritual development, for example.

All Y9 students have an opportunity to take part in a three-day residential at the Milkhope Activity Centre and in addition to this, the School offers several school trips and visits throughout the year, including visits to France and Valencia. There is an activity week at the end of the summer term which involves all students and staff and additional trips and visits are arranged as part of this week.

Shape of Day

Despite looking slightly complicated, the shape of the day at Astley is fairly straightforward with a registration session at the start of the day for all students and then five lessons, each of approximately one hour, throughout the day, together with a morning break and a lunch time. The slight complication currently is around lunchtime due to the very limited dining facilities on the site. All students begin their fourth lesson at 1220; some then have their 35-minute lunch in the middle of this lesson, others have their 35-minute lunch at the end of the session. The school manages this well and would like to continue with this approach moving forward as the staggered lunch supports behaviour for learning and helps to reinforce the calm nature of the school.

Time	Activity
0850 – 0905	Registration
0905 – 1005	P1/P2
1005 – 1105	P3/P4
1105 – 1120	Break
1120 – 1220	P5/P6
1220 – 1255	P7
1255 – 1330	P8/Lunch
1330 – 1405	P9/Lunch
1405 – 1505	P10/P11

The school operates a two-week timetable and during week 1, students in Y10 to Y13 finish their formal learning on a Wednesday at 1405. Y9 students take part in an enrichment activity until 1505. This arrangement is to facilitate additional staff development and meetings for colleagues in both schools and during this time, staff work on a number of development activities. These include working within

their faculties, individual staff development on areas such as Google classrooms, working across Schools so that Whytrig staff have an opportunity to be part of their faculty area for planning, and sessions on intervention planning where colleagues can work together with the pastoral and SEND teams to plan strategies for learners who may require additional support.

Year 9

Students in year 9 follow a broadly similar programme of study for English, maths, science, ICT, PE, personal, social and health education (PSHE), RE, history, geography, French, food technology, 3D design, art and music.

When the School had its specialist maths and computing status, all young people in Y9 started a three-year BTEC in computer science. This is no longer the case, but all students do still follow ICT.

Students are grouped into two half year group bands for English, maths, PE, art and technology. This enables the learners to be set by ability in English and maths and facilitates smaller groups in art and technology. The half year grouping for PE is necessary to support the curriculum in terms of team games and activities.

For the remainder of their curriculum time, students are divided into five groups and these young people stay together for French, geography, history, IT, music, science and PSHE. The mix of the groups is largely determined by the science faculty as there is an element of streaming that takes place for these subjects. In the future, when the year group has reached its capacity, there will be six groups for these subjects to ensure that the numbers are manageable and that each learner can be offered the support that they need.

Although science appears as one subject on the timetable for Y9, the allocated time is split equally between biology, chemistry and physics. This is to best prepare these students for their science courses in KS4, whether it be dual or triple science.

Students experience a variety of sports and activities in PE including football, rugby, table tennis, athletics, handball, dodgeball, gymnastics, badminton, swimming, personal survival, trampolining, boxercise, netball, rounders, cricket, fitness, weights, circuit training, softball and occasionally dance, although this is more of a challenge as the facilities are less able to support this.

The art team take the lead on most of the technology activities in the School, where graphics, textiles and digital design are all incorporated into the art curriculum.

Year 9 students choose their options in January and they start their core GCSE courses in English, maths and science after Easter. Their option courses start formally in the September of Y10.

On Wednesday in week one of the timetable, all Y9 students participate in an enrichment activity for the last lesson of their day. The tutor groups rotate into different PSHE activities over time and topics covered usually include sex and relationship education, substance abuse and homophobic and other prejudice behaviours. When not allocated to PSHE, students can opt into their enrichment activity, with the choices varying each year. This year the options include boxercise in the sports hall, swimming in the pool, a community group which runs from a classroom, dance in the gym, STEM in a science lab and a very popular film club option which is based in the WOW faculty.

Key Stage 4

All students in key stage 4 have a core entitlement of English, maths, science, PE and PSHRE. Students then elect for three options leading to GCSE, BTEC or Cambridge National qualifications in a range of subjects including French, geography, history, business studies, ICT, travel and tourism, PE, health and social care, art, 3D design and music.

The school is conscious that under their current system each student in KS4 follows a maximum of eight GCSEs (or equivalent), whilst many other schools structure their curriculum so that their learners follow courses in nine or more subjects. Mindful of the progress 8 measure, colleagues in the senior leadership team have considered carefully whether they may return to their previous system of students choosing four options for KS4 with less time allocated to each. They have agreed, however, that focusing more thoroughly and deeply on fewer subjects is the best decision for their young people.

Students are guided and supported when choosing their level 2 courses, with the majority of young people choosing at least one course from the 'EBac' column which includes triple science, French, geography and history. Some students, for whom this group of subjects is not appropriate, may follow a life skills course which is run by the inclusion team and focuses on the general aspects of coping with life. This is always arranged in consultation with parents and carers. Some of this curriculum time is also used for these learners to have additional support with their other subjects. Students have a free choice for their other option subjects, although there are some entry requirements for the triple science and ICT courses.

A very small number (usually less than five) of KS4 students have an alternative education, where they are educated off site in a more suitable environment, such as 'Engage' in Blyth. These alternative placements are brokered by the Local Authority.

Although it has been offered to students, until last year there has rarely been enough interest in food technology to run a GCSE group. It is anticipated that this will change with much improved facilities. Similarly, there are no KS4 groups running in resistant materials or performing arts and these subjects have not been offered recently due to the lack of suitable facilities or staff. It is a clear aspiration for Astley that these options all reappear as part of the curriculum moving forward.

Inevitably, some option subjects are more popular than others and KS4 courses will only run if there is a take up of at least ten students, to ensure that they are financially viable. The only exception to this currently is French as this is the only modern foreign language that Astley is able to offer. Ideally, the school would like to be able to offer additional languages in the future.

Students in key stage four continue to work in two separate half year groups for the majority of their subjects, with the exception of their option subjects where the whole year group is timetabled together. There is an upper and lower band (year half) for each year and there are usually three or four groups on each year half, with six or seven groups running in each option block.

When English and maths are running on the timetable, there is an additional group in place in the upper band, to enable a subject specialist to work specifically with the grade 4/5 boundary students.

Key Stage 5/ Post 16 Learning

The majority of students in the sixth form have completed KS4 at Astley and choose to stay there for their post 16 studies. A handful of students join the sixth form from elsewhere and this number has

increased recently due to Blyth Academy not offering post 16 courses to their Y11. Some students who complete their GCSEs at Astley choose to go elsewhere for their further education. This is quite often students who wish to follow performing arts courses as these are not currently able to be offered at Astley due to the limited facilities. This will change in the future.

There are also several students who choose to follow an apprenticeship route once they have completed Y11. There are a number of apprenticeships available to students at Astley once they have completed 6th form, including some positions in SEND, admin and IT. Any learning support apprenticeships that are available are either in Whytrig or Seaton Sluice as it would be inappropriate to place these young people in a formal learning support setting in the high school. Not all of these apprentices have come directly from Astley, some apply from other schools or colleges and some appointments are more mature students.

Astley would like to be able to expand its apprenticeship offer in the future and have been looking further into catering and site maintenance, for example. They have advertised a number of new apprenticeships this year, but so far have been unsuccessful in appointing.

Students in the sixth form at Astley have a variety of subjects available to them, made up of A levels, BTECs and Cambridge Technical qualifications, as well as resits in GCSE maths and English, should these be required for any students who have not reached the expected standard of grade 4 at the end of KS4.

Students typically choose three level 3 courses from a range of subjects including art and design, biology, chemistry, English literature, geography, history, maths, further maths, physics and psychology A levels; applied science, business, ICT and travel & tourism BTECs, and sports and health and social care Cam Techs. It is quite common for sixth form students at Astley to choose a mixture of A level, BTEC and Cam Tech courses. The newer T-level qualifications are not offered at Astley, nor are they likely to be moving forward.

As with KS4, courses don't usually run in the sixth form if there are less than ten students opting for them. There are a few exceptions to this on occasion. For example, in recent years there was a French A Level group ran for a small number of students who wanted to follow a languages route, but because of the size of the group it was allocated a smaller amount of contact time on the timetable.

There are five option blocks running in each of Y12 and Y13, each with between two and five groups in them. When the sixth form reaches its capacity in the new development, the number of subjects on offer in each option block will inevitably increase.

Whilst most level 3 courses are allocated 9 hours of study time a fortnight, on occasion there are some subjects that manage their courses with less contact time. This is mainly due to staffing levels and with increased sixth form numbers in the future, all subjects will be able to offer the recommended number of guided learning hours for their students.

There are currently no performing arts courses running in the sixth form, but it is anticipated that the current increase in music take up for KS4 will continue through to KS5, especially when the available music facilities are more appropriate. Dance is an area that the school is desperate to develop as several of the Y11 students at Astley leave to pursue this aspect of performing arts elsewhere. There are no suitable facilities at present to run this course.

The school has recently reintroduced applied science to the sixth form and will be reintroducing law A level from September 2022, sociology A level from September 2023. It is also planned to reintroduce A

Levels in English language and further maths in the coming years, as well as possibly politics, philosophy and ethics.

As well as following their chosen level 3 courses, sixth form students also have directed independent study time as a feature of their timetable. During this time, students are allocated a venue to work in, where they are supervised by colleagues. This is quite often the library, particularly for Y12, but other spaces are also used for this purpose. It is important that suitable spaces for this independent study are made available in any new development.

When students are not in formal lessons or supervised independent study, they are able to access a variety of spaces and this works very well. Students can choose to spend this time in the library or other available study areas, should they wish to work, or they can opt to access Café 6, which is the dedicated social area for sixth form. Some subject areas have dedicated spaces for sixth form students to work in and this is a feature that supports the curriculum well.

Some sixth form students also participate in additional activities during the day such as mentoring younger learners, either in Y9 or in Whytrig, or reading to groups of nursery aged children who come to the community library. A number of sports activities are also available to sixth form and ideally, they would be able to access the new fitness studio when it is not being used to support the PE curriculum. Some post 16 learners also follow Duke of Edinburgh Award and they may spend some of their non-contact time working on their portfolios for this.

Faculties

Although the faculties in Astley are currently standalone subjects or groups of subjects, the majority of colleagues from all curriculum areas work well together, particularly around the sharing of good practice. The current faculty structure works well, although there are some planned changes in the future, and flexibility in accommodation will be key should any of the subjects move to a different area. There is regular consultation with staff regarding which subjects are best placed in each faculty. Each faculty has a head of faculty and these colleagues are all line managed by different members of the senior leadership team.

Faculties are expected to be organised as:

1. English
2. Maths
3. Science
 - Applied science
 - Physics
 - Biology
 - Chemistry
4. World of Work
 - Business studies
 - Travel and tourism
 - ICT
5. Arts and Technology
 - Art including 3d art, graphics, textiles and photography
 - Food technology

- Nutrition
 - 3D Design/Resistant materials*
 - Music
 - Dance*
 - Performing Arts*
6. PE and Health
 - Physical education
 - Health and social care
 - Sports
 7. Culture and Diversity
 - Geography
 - History
 - Religious education
 - Modern foreign languages
 8. Social Sciences
 - Psychology – currently with science
 - Law* - will start in 2022 as part of the English faculty
 - Sociology*
 - Philosophy and ethics*
 9. SEND
 - Life Skills

*indicates subjects which will be introduced or reintroduced into the curriculum in the future.

3.2 Teaching and Learning

As with any school, there is great variety in the styles of teaching and learning employed across Astley. Senior colleagues are very keen to give autonomy to staff, with no set teaching style or structure imposed on them. Classrooms are all arranged differently, depending on the teacher, the faculty, the group of learners or the subject. There are of course some basic principles which colleagues must adhere to, but ultimately the goal for Astley is to deliver excellent teaching, which in turn will lead to excellent learning.

Although there is a much more traditional focus and feel to the curriculum in recent years, staff are still encouraged to try new things and to constantly develop their own practice. Every member of staff from across the Federation took part in an action research project in recent years, with projects ranging from developing the use of WAGOLs (What A Good One Looks Like), to quick quizzes with self-assessment only, to mindfulness activities at the beginning of each lesson. The outcomes and impact of each project were carefully recorded and shared across the schools.

Some faculties are more confident to try new strategies in the classroom, with colleagues in the World of Work faculty being particularly successful in this. This faculty has a suite of spaces which are very close together and it is felt that this grouping of the spaces has really helped this team grow over the years. In the new facilities, all faculties will have a suite of spaces, as well as a faculty staff work room, and it is therefore anticipated this culture of strong team working will spread across the school. English and Culture and Diversity are already starting to move their thinking forward with the introduction of some new staff and therefore some new ideas, leading to evident progress in these areas. The maths

team has also recently changed and there are already some positive signs of development with this faculty too.

Inevitably, some colleagues have strengths in particular areas such as plenaries or lesson starters, and where these strengths are identified, they are used to support other colleagues who may wish to or need to improve in these areas. Consequently, peer observation is becoming more common for staff within Astley. Observation between the schools is less common currently and this is an area which the schools would like to develop.

Staff are also encouraged to visit other schools to look at different practice, particularly colleagues who have been teaching at Astley for an extended period of time. Some staff have been at the school for more than ten years.

Learning walks are also scheduled into the timetable and staff are therefore used to other colleagues just popping into the teaching spaces. These 'walks' are carried out by the senior leadership team once a half term and middle leaders once each half term. This has helped to develop a positive open door culture in Astley. In addition to the learning walks, there is also a rigorous schedule of book scrutiny which takes place to ensure that colleagues are clear about the assessment for learning policies and to look at the progress that some of the learners are making.

The schools would like to further develop their practice around observation and are interested in using technology to support this. They would like to identify at least one classroom which could be used as an observation space, with the infrastructure and technology to support this. The school had considered creating an observation window into a classroom but feel that this would not be as useful as a solution making use of technology. Colleagues could be observed 'live' but more importantly, a lesson could be recorded and then used for further professional development, either for the colleague being recorded or for other colleagues to observe good practice.

There are usually three dedicated professional development training days for all staff within the Federation and these will focus on a number of areas. One day is usually for all three schools in the Federation and will focus on a number of whole Federation wide issues such as exam results or federation policies, for example. The second of these days usually has a SEND and inclusion focus and staff work their way around a carousel of different activities, each with a different focus. The third day is school specific, with each organisation planning their own sessions. In addition to these CPD days, there are also several twilight sessions throughout the year with focus areas such as assessment, appraisal and teaching and learning.

There are weekly staff training sessions on a Wednesday afternoon, and these are often used for faculty time, but also for sharing good practice and developing teaching and learning generally across the schools.

Acknowledged as a school with good or better teaching and learning, Astley is part of the Whitley Bay Teaching School Alliance, to support the delivery of the secondary ITT programme. Astley colleagues lead on a number of areas including formative assessment and inclusivity, where the school is known for its strengths.

Astley is now also part of the SCITT programme, based out of John Spence High School and currently hosts teacher training students from Sunderland University.

Team teaching is not a regular occurrence in the School. It has been tested in the past, but with space only ever available for groups of thirty students, it has always involved getting cover for an extra colleague to be involved. Working with larger groups of students is not something that the school is keen to explore further on a regular basis, although there is a desire to be able to bring larger groups of sixth form students together for a larger lecture on occasion.

Student voice plays a part in the development of teaching and learning in Astley, particularly in finding out more about strategies which different faculties use which students find useful, such as good exam preparation or revision techniques.

3.3 Learning Technologies

The use of technologies to support learning is mixed across the different faculties in Astley. The school used to have a maths and computing specialism, and although this is no longer the case, there is still some evidence of this specialism within the existing facilities.

There are a number of traditional ICT suites which each have approximately thirty desk top machines in them. These are used predominantly by the world of work faculty and health and social care, although they are available for other subject areas to book. In addition, the library has a number of desk top PCs and these are used mainly by sixth form students during the day when they have independent study sessions. An additional ICT rich independent study area has also recently been created in the sixth form area. These arrangements are expected to continue in the future.

Art and music have access to fixed Macs in their learning environments and these are required to support various aspects of their curricula, such as graphics, publishing and composition.

The School invested in a number of sets of laptops for their young people to use, but these proved to be disappointing for a number of reasons and they have now moved away from these and towards Chromebooks. Each faculty has at least one set of Chromebooks which are stored in recharge trolleys. Altogether there are now five trolleys of Chromebooks and five trolleys of laptops, as well as several Chromebooks which are stored in the sixth form area. Some faculties make greater use of this technology than others, such as PE and health, science and maths. The School recently explored the possibility of a student/parent purchase scheme, but this proved to be cost prohibitive and is not being progressed.

Every main learning space has an interactive whiteboard or equivalent touch screen technology at the 'front' of the room. These are used more effectively in some faculties, but generally they are not used as interactively as intended, by both staff and young people, and instead they are often used as display only technology.

As is typical in any School, a growing number of students have their own mobile technology, be it a smart phone or tablet device. Students in Y9 and KS4 are discouraged from bringing their own iPads or tablets, but sixth form students are able to bring their own devices freely to support their learning.

Astley has a clear policy for use of mobile phones in school. Students are allowed to bring them, but they are expected to switch them off or put them away during lessons, unless the teacher specifically suggests that they can be used to support learning. This includes, but is not limited to, students using the scientific calculator features, the camera and live recording functions, or simply to access the internet, given that many students have a stronger internet connection on their personal device than

certain areas of the School can currently offer. Students are able to use their phones freely at break and lunchtimes.

The climate relating to the use of technology is changing and staff are beginning to embrace this change. There will always be a need for some more traditional ICT to support the curriculum, but the School would like to see a much greater mixture of devices and operating systems on offer for both the students and staff, enabling students to have a degree of choice about which learning technology they use to best support their learning.

Like in Whytrig, the use of technology to support learning in Astley has changed quite a lot over the last two years, in part due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Additional resources were provided to support on-line learning for students whilst working from home and the quality and strength of the network connectivity on site has also improved recently. As well as the young people, the staff have really grown in confidence with their use of and approach to using the technology, particularly around Google Classroom.

The single most limiting factor to a greater use of learning technology in the past has been the poor infrastructure, and the school is very much looking forward to this being improved as part of this project.

As for other technology, visualisers are used well currently in art, geography and science.

As with Whytrig, Astley has also moved away from having a school VLE, and instead makes very good use of Google Classroom. This is something that the staff at the school have fully embraced and there are regular training and developmental sessions around this, where staff from both schools share good and new practice with other colleagues.

The Federation uses Bromcom as their management information system, and staff access to this outside of school has recently improved as all staff are now provided with a school laptop.

3.4 Pastoral Care and Organisation

Astley operate a horizontal pastoral system, organised by year group across the school. Each year group in Y9 to Y11 has a dedicated student progress leader who has overall responsibility for the academic progress of the students in their year group. There is one student progress leader for the sixth form overseeing both Y12 and Y13. To support these colleagues, there are also two pastoral support workers, one working with Y9 to Y11, the other with the sixth form.

Staff are arranged into tutor teams with a variety of experience and subject areas within each team. Consideration is currently being given as to whether it may be helpful to have all tutors for a year group based in one faculty area, but this is not seen to be crucial at this stage. It is anticipated that any design for a new building will support a number of different approaches to the organisation of the pastoral system.

New colleagues usually become Y9 tutors, where possible, and then stay with their tutor groups for three years from Y9 through to Y11. The student progress leader for Y9 stays with this year group every year as they work closely with the Y8 learners in the feeder middle schools. The progress leaders for KS4 stay with their year group for two years.

The assistant headteacher at Astley has responsibility for the sixth form. There is a dedicated team of sixth form tutors for Y12 and Y13 and each tutor stays with their year group for two years. The school used to have mixed Y12/Y13 tutor groups but have moved back to the horizontal structure to ensure that the focus on UCAS, apprenticeship or other applications is more easily facilitated.

Every tutor group across the school spends at least 15 minutes at the start of each day with their tutor and there is an assembly once a week for each year group. Y12 and Y13 have a joint assembly. Tutor time on the other four days is structured and organised by the student progress leaders for each year group, with activities ranging from merits focus, quizzes, topical discussion to 'Drop Everything And Read' (DEAR) for the whole school on a Thursday morning.

Whole school assemblies happen very rarely for Astley, with the main limitation being the lack of a suitable venue. On the rare occasion that this does happen, possibly at Christmas, all students are gathered in the sports hall. It is not a priority for the School to change this arrangement in the future.

There is a small group of selected senior students from Y12 and Y13 who have several responsibilities including presenting at sixth form evenings, taking part in new staff interviews, running school tours for prospective students, parents or staff and leading the student council meetings. The student council meets half termly and involves students from all year groups.

There are several other times throughout the year when the views of the young people are gathered. Once a year, all students are asked to share their views on a number of topics, based around the Ofsted questionnaire. There are regular 'Hot Chocolate with the Head' sessions, where students are nominated by different staff to spend time with the Head of School and discuss different aspects of school life. These discussion topics may include particular subject areas, how new staff appear to be settling in, levels of homework and so on. The head of the sixth form also meets regularly with Y12 students who have joined Astley from elsewhere, to ensure that they are settling in and making progress.

The Pastoral Hub at Astley is a key group of support offices and spaces, accessible to young people throughout the day. The school would very much like to see this provision improved upon in the future. As well as the Student Progress Leaders and the Pastoral Support Workers, this 'hub' will also include the inclusion area and a small support space which will be used to help calm down any individuals who are just having a bad day. The inclusion area has recently been split into two areas with a dedicated behaviour support colleague based in one of these areas. This colleague also then spends some time working with some students in their mainstream lessons.

Following the Coronavirus pandemic, Astley have reintroduced a School Counsellor to the team to support the learners. This colleague spends three days a week based at Astley but is anticipated that this time will increase in the coming years. The counselling accommodation is makeshift at the moment, but in the longer term, this colleague should be part of the pastoral hub.

3.5 Support for Learning/SEND

The School has an excellent reputation for being inclusive and there are a number of different approaches at Astley for supporting learners who need some additional support. Support for learning is planned throughout the day, with the majority of support taking place within mainstream sessions where support colleagues will work with individuals or small groups of students, as directed by the

teacher. This can regularly involve small groups of students working outside of the classroom, practising a key skill, with some more focussed input.

The SEND team consists of the SENDCo, an assistant SENDCo, several teaching assistants, some with very focussed roles, such as literacy support, apprentices and an admin colleague.

Some sixth form students also volunteer to support the learning of some of the younger students, usually in WMS or Y9, and this is particularly encouraged if the Y12 or Y13 student has expressed an interest in pursuing a career in childcare or education, for example.

The pastoral support worker and student progress leaders are the main link for the students who need additional support and they work closely with the SEND team to ensure that the intervention strategies put in place are most appropriate and effective for each learner. Every Wednesday the pastoral team and the SENDCo spend time together for this purpose.

There is currently a dedicated SEND hub, which is housed in the old caretaker's bungalow, known as 'The Bungalow' and this facility is used to support learners who are struggling in the mainstream setting. This can be on a lesson by lesson, or subject by subject basis, and it is also used occasionally as a time out space for young people who need to leave their lesson. There is a relaxation/chill out space within 'The Bungalow' which supports this.

There are some small groups of students who work in here with one of the SEND team and this intervention is usually arranged in advance with the class teacher. Focussed reading and literacy activities also take place in here.

There is a small kitchen area within the SEND hub and this supports learners who struggle with eating their lunch in the busier dining setting. It will be important to retain a similar facility in any new environment.

In addition to 'The Bungalow' there is an inclusion room within the main building, which is used to support young people who are experiencing some challenges with their behaviour in or around lessons. Students can be referred to inclusion for a number of reasons and their time in here is usually temporary, sometimes for a lesson, sometimes for a day or two. Students work in isolation in here and are supervised either by the dedicated Pastoral Support Worker for inclusion or by available members of the Senior Leadership Team.

More recently, an area has also been created within inclusion to work in a more supportive way with some of the students who are just not coping at that particular time, and this is working well. It is important that this inclusion provision is located within the pastoral hub moving forward and not at all associated with the SEND provision.

The inclusion provision is successful for the majority learners and usually removes the need for an official exclusion. In some cases, it has proved invaluable, one example being a Y11 student last year who was only able to manage school for three days a week, spent two of them in inclusion, and was able to complete his GCSEs as a result of this intervention arrangement.

4 Buildings and Learning Environments

4.1 Site Layout

It is very important that the two schools are seen as separate entities, with separate entry points into the building for learners in Whytrig and Astley. It may also be appropriate for the sixth form students to have an additional access point, but this is not crucial.

Colleagues at the schools would like the learners to have a sense of progression as they move through their school journey and if possible, the buildings should support this. This may mean having the middle school closer to the site access point, with the high school and sixth form further back, or this sense of progression may manifest itself in another way with the built form.

There will be several spaces on the site which are shared between learners from both schools and it is anticipated that these will need to be located centrally for ease of access for both students and staff. It will be important that these more specialist and often larger spaces are not seen as being only associated with the high school.

4.2 Flexibility and Adaptability

As with any new or remodelled school, it will be important that the buildings are both flexible and adaptable and will be able to accommodate changing models of curriculum, teaching and learning in the future.

Flexibility around the pastoral system will be important as it may be possible that in future years, Astley moves to a vertical tutoring model rather than the horizontal one at present. Whilst this will usually just involve moving tutor groups into different spaces, some thought should be given to how this may be accommodated if required.

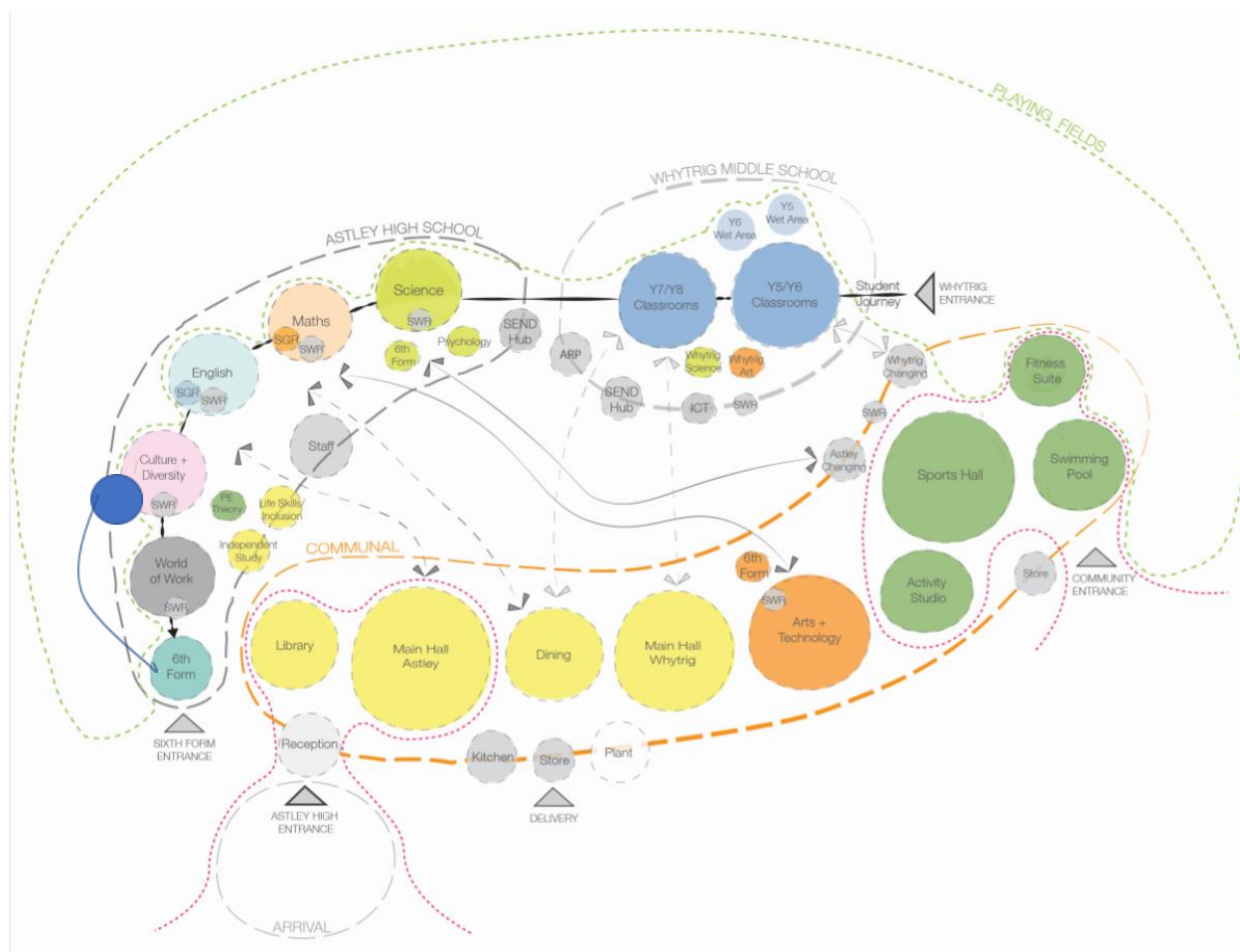
National curriculum requirements may alter in the future, with a greater emphasis being placed on vocational learning or science, for example. It will therefore be important to understand how different curriculum areas may physically grow in size, whilst others reduce, for example.

Flexibility and future proofing are important considerations. The school will need to be able to respond to ever changing curriculum demands, teaching styles and demographic changes. As such the new building(s) need to be easily reconfigured and if required extended in the future without disrupting the education provision.

4.3 Adjacencies – UPDATED ADJACENCY DIAGRAM REQUESTED FROM RYDER

Although many of the areas in both Whytrig and Astley are likely to be standalone faculties or key stages, there are a number of adjacencies which will be important to develop or strengthen for the schools.

It is important that Whytrig and Astley are seen as separate organisations and the design should facilitate this. There will be a separate sixth form centre, but this does not necessarily need to be a separate building.



Key stage 2 areas for Y5 and Y6 in Whytrig should be grouped together, ideally with a direct adjacency to the outdoor learning space. Similarly, there will be an adjacent cluster of learning spaces for Y7 and Y8 which will likely include the main science and art facilities for Whytrig, so access to these spaces for the younger learners should be considered.

As well as being used for Whytrig assemblies, some PE and other activities, it is anticipated that the Whytrig hall will be used by sixth form students from Astley and potentially also for staff briefings, so the location of this will need to be carefully planned.

There will be a number of learning and support spaces which will be shared between both schools and it is therefore important that access to these areas is straightforward for both sets of learners and staff. These shared areas include the sports facilities, the technology spaces, music, ICT, the library, dining and a central staff social area. A connection between the SEND hubs for both schools would also be of benefit to support cross-school working in this area. The new Additional Resourced Provision will have a strong relationship with the SEND hubs.

Learners from Whytrig, especially in Y7 and Y8, will regularly access some of the more specialist shared environments, particularly in the arts and technology, music and WOW faculties, so a good adjacency and/or access between the middle school and these areas would be sensible.

It will be helpful to have a strong adjacency between the sixth form centre and the library and given the nature of the subjects in the World of Work faculty, an adjacency here will also be sensible.

English and maths at Astley, as core subjects with similar group sizes and support, will benefit from having an adjacency as they will be able to share a number of similar spaces. This will also potentially reduce travel time for students as quite often students move from English to maths or vice versa.

Culture and Diversity is a standalone faculty, as are the science and PE and Health faculties.

The Social Sciences faculty will be new and developing in the coming years, with some overlap with the Culture and Diversity faculty, but also with a connection to the sixth form areas.

The Arts and Technology faculty is a priority for Astley in terms of development moving forward and it is very important that the subjects within this area are closely related. The only possible exception to this could be dance, as it may be more appropriate to have the dance/activity studio grouped within the PE and Health facilities.

As a general principle across the new buildings, there should be as much physical transparency as possible to support and facilitate cross curricular working between all key stages and faculties.

Curriculum Analysis

The current curriculum model for Astley has recently been improved, with a real focus on depth of learning to ensure that the young people can access the required number of guided learning hours for both their level 2 and level 3 courses. It is anticipated that this model will be carried forward into the new facilities, albeit with an improved curriculum offer, to include subjects such as performing arts and resistant materials. The curriculum model for Whytrig is very much based around the National Curriculum and there are currently no plans for this to alter in the foreseeable future.

Each curriculum model has been adapted to account for the increase in numbers on roll and these projected models have been analysed and used to dictate the amount of space allocated to each learning area in the schedule of accommodation.

4.4 General Learning Spaces

All general learning spaces will be used as tutor bases, with tutor teams for Astley likely to be intentionally dispersed across different subject areas and therefore across the building. Tutor spaces in Whytrig will be clustered together by year group.

All learning spaces will have access to an interactive whiteboard or similar technology at the 'front' of the room. There will be plenty of opportunities for subject and age appropriate display in all spaces, as well as within circulation areas and public spaces.

With the projected number on roll it is anticipated that there will be three tutor groups in each of Y5 to Y8, six groups in Y9 to Y11 and five groups in each of Y12 and Y13. This will mean an overall requirement of 12 tutor bases in Whytrig and 28 bases in Astley, with as many of these based in general learning classrooms as possible. The remainder will occupy some practical spaces, with the exception of any heavy technology, sports, dance or highly specialist science areas.

4.4.1 Whytrig Class Bases

The class bases for Y5 and Y6 learners in Whytrig need to be multi-functional, with almost all subject areas taught in them other than PE, art, technology and very occasionally science. It will be important that these key stage two spaces have a primary feel for these youngest learners. It will

also be helpful to include a sink in each of these KS2 classrooms, so that water can be easily accessed to support a variety of learning activities.

Rather than having a separate cloak area or lockers, the Y5 and Y6 class bases will include a 'wardrobe-like' storage area which will be built into one wall. This will include area for pupils' coats and bags, as well as providing a generous storage area for class resources. The sliding doors which will hide this area will include pin board and write-on whiteboards to support the learning activities taking place.

It could be useful if the KS2 learners have access to some small less formal breakout areas, making good use of the circulation space or a 'wider corridor'. These areas will be used for individuals or smaller groups of learners to work with a teacher or learning support colleague directly outside of their classrooms. These areas should not be too large and must not provide opportunities for pupils to hide away out of sight.

To support the development of outdoor learning for Whytrig, ideally the Y5 and Y6 class bases will have direct access to the external space. There will be a cluster of class bases for Y5 and a separate cluster for Y6.

There will be a group of class bases for Y7 and Y8, with most of these being general teaching rooms, but some tutor groups in these years could make use of the art/craft and science spaces for their tutor base, should this be appropriate. Each of the general teaching spaces will be assigned a subject to ensure that the resources and display are appropriate to each room.

4.4.2 Maths

The curriculum analysis for Astley indicates that there is a requirement for four general learning classrooms to be made available for the maths faculty, each accommodating up to thirty students. These spaces will be cellular in form to support the approach to learning in this area.

The School offers additional intervention support with a specialist colleague in maths at key stage four, running in parallel with the half year groups (up to 4 classes) to provide a more intense experience for a smaller number of students, usually no more than ten learners at a time. Ideally a larger group room will be available within the maths faculty for this purpose.

It is important that this intervention work can take place in a dedicated room and there is no desire for open breakout areas to be provided to support this activity.

4.4.3 English

The five general learning spaces allocated to English will be standard classroom spaces able to accommodate a typically sized group of up to thirty students, although one of these spaces could possibly be a slightly smaller seminar type space to support the smaller post 16 groups in their English language or literature A levels. There is also usually a GCSE resit group in the sixth form which could also make use of these space, depending on the number of students.

As with maths, the English faculty will also require access to a larger group room to support the specialist intervention work that will continue with key stage four students.

4.4.4 Culture and Diversity

The Culture and Diversity faculty will include designated spaces for MFL, PSHE, RE, history and geography. As this faculty area develops over time it is anticipated that a smaller social sciences faculty will be created, almost as a sub-faculty. Further information is included in section 4.4.5

It is also desirable for the MFL offer to increase for young people at Astley, with more than just French being available to learners, should there be a demand in the future.

Most of the general learning spaces for this faculty will need to accommodate up to thirty students, but one space could potentially be a seminar space which will be used predominantly for KS4 and KS5 MFL groups, as well as for some of the smaller humanities and social sciences A level groups. One of the classrooms should ideally include access to water, probably just a small sink, as this will support some of the learning activities and topics in geography in particular, such as volcanoes, rivers, coasts and oxbow lakes.

Colleagues within the faculty already work well together, but further collaboration across the disciplines will be encouraged with the inclusion of a staff work base in this area.

4.4.5 Social Sciences

The new Social Sciences faculty will be created and developed in the coming years, with some overlap with the Culture and Diversity faculty. It is anticipated that space for law, philosophy and ethics, sociology and possibly politics will be required, and it is likely that psychology will eventually also belong to this subject group, so the space allocated to this subject should be carefully positioned.

In the short term, psychology will continue to be delivered by the science team and as such should ideally be positioned close to the science faculty, although this is not crucial. This would also offer an opportunity for science colleagues to make use of this space for theory only lessons when required.

Social sciences will not necessarily be a physical faculty with separate seminar rooms, or even a staff work room, but it will have an identity, whether that be in the form of signage or display. Courses that will be offered by this faculty will likely all be at level 3, so some connection with the sixth form areas would be appropriate.

4.4.6 Other

In addition to English, maths, culture and diversity and social sciences, the detailed curriculum analysis for Astley indicates that there will be a requirement for a further three general teaching spaces.

One of these spaces will be allocated to support the theory aspects of the PE curriculum in key stages four and five and its location will therefore need to be carefully considered. The PE team make good use of both mobile and fixed learning technologies, so perhaps a location which offers some adjacency with the World of Work faculty may be appropriate for this space. This could also provide a non-ICT based space for the business studies colleagues at times when it is available and appropriate.

The second and third of these general spaces could potentially be slightly smaller, as one will be allocated to inclusion and the other as an independent study area for sixth form. The inclusion area will have the ability to split into two. It is a standalone space which is permanently staffed but must not be too isolated from other areas as there are often young people working in this area who are having challenges with their behaviour for a number of reasons. It will be part of the Pastoral Hub for Astley where the Student Progress Leaders are based.

The space allocated for independent study is for sixth form students who are allocated directed study sessions as part of their timetable. It may be sensible for this seminar sized space to be positioned within or alongside the World of Work faculty, which will ideally also be close to the library and the Sixth Form Centre. This would also then provide an opportunity for the World of Work team to potentially access this space, should they require a non-ICT space for a lesson.

As the project further develops, the need for this separate independent study space may be removed if it can be demonstrated that there is enough space within the library and the sixth form study centre to accommodate the required number of students, which will usually be no more than 50-60 at any one time.

4.5 Specialist Learning Spaces

Although the majority of specialist spaces are required for Astley to support their Y9, KS4 and KS5 curriculum, there is also a requirement for some specialist facilities to support the work of Whytrig.

4.5.1 Whytrig

Whilst much of the science curriculum for Y5 and Y6 is class based, these learners do occasionally access a more traditional science lab, especially Y6. Students in Y7 and Y8 will require access to a science lab for the vast majority of their science curriculum and there will therefore be a dedicated science lab for Whytrig located within the middle school. This lab does not need to have a high specification as when more complex practical experiments are planned, the learners will be able to move over to a science lab in Astley. It does need to have access to power, data, gas and water, however. A dedicated science prep room for Whytrig will not be required as all equipment and resources associated with KS2 and KS3 science will be stored within the lab.

There will be a dedicated art and design space for Whytrig which all of these younger learners will access regularly for their timetabled art sessions.

For Y5 and Y6, all other practical activity will predominantly take place in their class bases and each of these general classrooms should therefore include a small wet area to provide access to water.

Y7 and Y8 students will access the music facilities shared with Astley for their music lessons. These KS3 learners will also be able to access any peripatetic staff for individual music tuition over in the high school, although the inclusion of a dedicated music practice room in the middle school would be beneficial for this purpose. Y5 and Y6 have their class teacher for music and will usually stay in their class base for this, although they may also choose to use their new hall space in the future to support this curriculum area when it is appropriate.

Some of these key stage 2 learners have individual cello lessons with a peripatetic colleague; another reason for their ideally being a music practice room available within the middle school building. There are also whole class cello and guitar lessons for some middle school groups, and

these currently take place in one of the classrooms. This is not ideal, and it is likely that in the new facilities these large lessons will happen in the hall, so storage in this area must be considered carefully.

Students in KS3 at Whytrig will also access a shared ICT suite as part of the World of Work faculty at Astley, so routes to this area should be considered.

All other practical curriculum areas in Whytrig, such as technology and PE will make use of the shared specialist spaces available to both schools. Careful consideration must therefore be given to how these spaces are accessed.

4.5.2 Performing Arts

There are currently very limited facilities to support the performing arts curriculum at either school, but most concerning currently is the lack of access for KS4 and KS5 students, as these learners are often the ones who choose to leave Astley to continue their studies elsewhere. This must change in the new buildings.

There are several community requests to use larger spaces which cannot be currently accommodated due to the lack of specialist performing arts facilities, particularly in relation to dance. It is hoped that these requests from local dance and arts groups will be met in the future.

The suite of performing arts spaces will include dedicated areas for music and dance, but this curriculum team will also make use of the main hall to support their activities, and this should ideally be close to this suite. Activities will include opportunities for developing staging and props, and learning about sound and lighting, as part of the level 2 and 3 courses which will be offered. There will be a dedicated dance studio, and this could act as a green room/back of house to the main hall, although this space will also be used by PE and may therefore be more sensibly positioned within the PE and Health faculty.

Music is a growing curriculum area in Astley, with more students now opting for this subject at KS4. It is anticipated that this trend will continue into KS5 in the future. It is therefore important that a suite of suitable music spaces be included within the performing arts area. The music courses on offer include elements of composition and the technology to support this will need to be facilitated in the new music teaching spaces, perhaps with computer workstations and connected music keyboards positioned around the perimeter of the main space, with a more flexible working area centrally.

The future curriculum requirements for music at Astley and Whytrig will likely require more than just one music teaching space. However, given that the majority of this increase in curriculum time will be from smaller KS5 groups, it is desirable to have a dual use larger ensemble space which could also accommodate these sixth form groups of up to ten students. This will remove the need to have an additional dedicated music room which would be underutilised.

There are currently no dedicated music practise rooms in Astley, with one makeshift practise area being on the stage of the main hall behind the curtain and another being a recording studio which has recently been created from an old store cupboard. This must improve moving forward.

The practise rooms will be acoustically attenuated. These will be used by students practising individually or in small groups as part of a timetabled lesson, but also by a number of peripatetic

colleagues who come into both schools on a regular basis to work with students of all ages. These colleagues deliver tuition for a range of instruments including drums, singing, piano and guitar, so this must be taken into consideration when planning the size of the practise rooms. A drum kit should be accommodated in each practise room ideally. One of the practise rooms will double up as a recording studio.

There must be a separate generous storage room for music to enable all of the larger instruments to be stored safely and securely to ensure that they do not see any damage.

There is a school choir which meets to rehearse on a Friday after school and as this grows in size, it may be appropriate for these rehearsals to take place in one of the halls. The choir includes students from both Whytrig and Astley. There is also a staff band and a number of other smaller rock groups which rehearse regularly within the music area.

4.5.3 Art

Other than the dedicated art space for Whytrig, all other art spaces will be suited for access predominantly by Astley students. Art is multi-disciplinary for these older learners, with opportunities provided for engagement with textiles, graphics, photography and ceramics, as well as the more traditional aspects of the subject such as painting and drawing.

Within one art space, it is usual that several different activities are taking place at the same time, all requiring different resources. Some learners might access Apple Macs to work on their digital design or photography, others work centrally on dry projects around larger tables, and others may be working around the perimeter on more water-based projects or screen printing, for example. This approach to learning works very well for the young people in the School and it is important that this success is not diluted in the new facilities.

There is no requirement for a dedicated textiles room in the buildings, but it must be possible for students to study textiles as their chosen art form, should this be desirable.

The school currently has a dark room to support traditional photography, but the resources and materials associated with this are now proving to be cost prohibitive, so this provision need not be provided in the new buildings.

Similarly, there is currently a very well used kiln room, which is much bigger than one might ordinarily find in a school as it is also used extensively as a 3D storage and display area. Several local schools make use of the kiln, with their ceramic and pottery work being transported to site and then fired by Astley colleagues, before being collected. The size of the kiln room and associated areas will therefore need to be carefully considered.

There will need to be two art rooms provided for Astley as part of the project. One of these will be a standard art room, the other will be a larger more multi-functional art space which can also be used to support the 3D design courses.

Sixth form art groups are well catered for, with every A level art student allocated a dedicated work area, usually consisting of a double project table and a generous display area, with a separate room currently provided for each of Y12 and Y13. These work areas are well used by learners and quite often these students choose to use their designated area for independent study in their other subjects too. The school is very keen to see a more modern version of this facility provided in the

new art area but would rather see one combined space for both Y12 and Y13, which will need to accommodate up to 25 A level students at any one time.

4.5.4 Technology

The technology curriculum in Astley will include 3d design, resistant materials and food technology as a minimum, but as part of the 'Arts and Technology' faculty, there will be clear opportunities for graphics and textiles to be followed as separate courses in the future, should this be desirable.

The current design and technology facilities in Astley are very poor, with a resistant materials room which is barely usable and a food technology space that is far from ideal. These subject areas will see significant change in the new buildings.

There will be a dedicated modern resistant materials space which will facilitate all aspects of this curriculum, including multi materials work. This room will be supported by a suitable technician workshop where resources can be stored and prepared for use by the technology technician. This technology space will also be shared with Whytrig learners and access will therefore need to be considered carefully. Although the current facilities are poor, access works well at present, with a door at either end of the space for each school.

Whytrig learners will also be accessing the shared food technology room as part of their weekly curriculum. This space will have an associated food storage and prep room, not just an area to the side of the space, as is currently the case.

In addition to the dedicated RM and food rooms, there will also be a third room associated with technology which will have a less practical focus. This space will be used as a demonstration space for food technology when a full practical is not necessary, but it will also be available for the rest of the faculty to use as a theory space or a dry working area.

4.5.5 World of Work (WOW)

The WOW faculty comprises travel and tourism, business studies and ICT, with the two former choices proving to be increasingly popular at KS4 and KS5. All of these subjects make frequent use of dedicated ICT rich spaces and there will be a suite of ICT rooms or areas to continue to support this faculty. In time, health and social care may also join this faculty given the nature of the areas covered in these qualifications, but either way the ICT space associated with this subject should be included with the WOW faculty.

It may be helpful for this faculty to have an adjacency with one or more general classrooms, perhaps the space allocated to PE theory, to enable colleagues and students to have access to a space which is not ICT rich, should it be appropriate at times. This may be of particular use to some of the business studies groups. An adjacency with the library and sixth form centre may also prove useful, given the number of KS5 groups running within this faculty.

Although Y7 and Y8 learners from Whytrig will also access the ICT facilities within the faculty for their IT lessons, it is anticipated that the area will have a mature 'adult-like' feel to reflect the subjects that are on offer here.

Other subjects outside of the WOW faculty will also wish to access these ICT rich rooms from time to time, so access for all should be considered.

4.5.6 Science

Y5 and Y6 learners in Whytrig will usually access their science curriculum within their class bases in the middle school, although they do occasionally use the dedicated science lab. Y7 and Y8 students will almost always have their science lessons within the Whytrig science lab but will have the option of using the more specialist facilities in the high school on occasion should they be required.

All students in Astley experience separate sciences from the start of their time in Y9. The faculty believes that it is important for learners to be able to differentiate clearly between biology, chemistry and physics as this helps to prepare them for KS4 and beyond. Colleagues within the faculty all specialise in one or more of the disciplines for Y9 and KS4, but then deliver their specialist area within sixth form.

The science labs within the faculty do not all need to be identical, and they certainly do not all need to be the same size. Of the seven science spaces that will be required to support the curriculum in Astley, five of them should be able to support all disciplines and as such will be serviced with gas and water. The other two science spaces will be used for demonstrations and theory work predominantly, so will require a serviced staff demo bench to one end of the room, with the rest of the space being completely flexible. There should be a fume cupboard in at least two of the serviced labs.

Sixth form science students, particularly in biology, require a 'growing area' where they can set up and leave their experiments over a longer period of time. This does not necessarily need to be a separate or large room, but it does need to be secure. It may be sensible to include this as an extension of the prep room.

There will be one prep room for science, and this should be located as centrally as possible. It may be sensible for the prep room to have an adjacency with the staff work room for the faculty. Whytrig do not require a separate prep room for their science lab and all equipment associated with KS2 and KS3 science will be stored within the lab.

Psychology is a very popular A level subject within the science faculty, but ideally it should not be taught in a science lab, as happens at present. A generic space will be allocated to the subject (see general learning section) and this would ideally sit within the science faculty, although not crucial. This space also offers an additional theory space which could be used by science colleagues when required.

4.5.7 PE and Health

The internal sports accommodation for both schools will be co-located as part of the new development. This will include a 4-court sports hall, an activity studio, a fitness suite and a swimming pool. Whytrig will also make use of their dedicated hall as an additional PE space.

The sports hall will be used for many different sports including 5-a-side football, table tennis, handball, dodgeball, badminton, basketball, softball and cricket practise. In addition to the curriculum activities of the Schools, it is also used extensively by the community for football. The activity studio will also be used to support the PE curriculum for aerobics, gymnastics, circuit training, general fitness and dance.

There is currently a far from ideal fitness suite which is used to support both the KS4 and KS5 sports courses, as well as being used as an additional venue for exams. Whilst the Schools are not planning to continue using this resource for exams, as there will be other far more suitable venues, it is still desirable for Astley to have a fitness studio, which will be used for weights, circuits or possibly spinning. It is anticipated that this resource would also be appealing to the local community as there isn't currently a suitable equivalent in the area.

Although the activity studio will be used to support the dance and performing arts curriculum, this subject will not demand full time use of the facility so it will also be used to support other aspects of the PE curriculum. It will probably therefore be most sensible positioned within this faculty.

Swimming at both Whytrig and Astley forms a large part of the curriculum with all learners having swimming lessons throughout their years in each school. It is therefore highly desirable for the swimming pool to be retained or replicated as part of the project. If retained in its current location, then it may be appropriate to also retain the sports hall and gym to form a standalone sports complex for the Schools. This would also have potential for community use and access as it could easily be opened out of hours without needing any other part of the Schools to be made available.

It is important that there be a separate community entrance to the sports facilities for out of hours use and there may be a small reception area associated with this access point. This could possibly double up as the staff work room for this faculty.

The school is interested in exploring the possibility of developing a Community Café which could be used out of hours by the community who are coming to site to use the sports facilities. This could possibly link with or even double up as the sixth form café, should this be appropriate.

There is a requirement for dedicated PE changing for Whytrig and the changing facilities for Astley need to be carefully considered as the current arrangement is not ideal. It is desirable for there to be separate changing areas for indoor and outdoor activities, as well as dedicated changing for the swimming pool. This would also support community access to these areas.

Some non-practical space is needed to support the work of the PE and health faculty, both for the theory aspects of the GCSE and BTEC courses, and also for the health and social courses that run in KS4 and KS5. There will be a general classroom available for the PE team to make use of and there will be an ICT space which is allocated to support the health and social care curriculum. It would be sensible for these spaces to be adjacent to the WOW faculty as this would provide some flexibility for this team to make use of a non-ICT space, when appropriate.

As well as the usual internal and external storage requirements for PE, there will also need to be additional storage provision for the mountain bikes, tents and other camping equipment, which is used during the year, but mainly when students visit Milkhope for their residential activities. This equipment is currently stored in a container externally and this would ideally be avoided moving forward.

4.6 Sixth Form

Sixth form students at Astley have a dedicated sixth form centre which includes their main social and dining areas, as well as a small study area. The School would like to retain a mature identity for the sixth form, somewhere for younger learners to aspire to as they progress through their 'school journey'.

When sixth form students have a 'free period' on their timetable, they can choose whether to study or relax and it is important that they have areas for both activities.

There are currently several spaces available for sixth formers to use for study when they are not in a scheduled lesson including the individual dedicated work areas for art students, the library, a newly created ICT rich area within the sixth form centre and an ICT suite. It will be essential for post 16 students to have a dedicated quiet study area with access to some ICT facilities, in addition to the library where they are timetabled during their directed independent study sessions. These older students can bring their own devices to school with them and there will need to be space, as well as access to power and data, for these to be used.

If students choose to relax during their non directed sessions, they will be able to access their dedicated Café between 11am and 2pm, where they can buy a coffee or pre order their lunch. This facility is serviced by the school catering team. They are also able to access the main schools' dining areas for a hot meal should they choose to.

To prepare sixth form students for life beyond school and in particular university, it is desirable for them to have access to a lecture type facility. It is acknowledged that it is unlikely to be possible to provide a separate theatre solely for this purpose, but it may be appropriate to ensure that one of larger spaces, such as the middle school hall, is able to accommodate a larger lecture for the sixth form.

Some sixth form students take part in mentoring or general learning support activities with the younger pupils in Whytrig and as such they have access to this part of the site. The school are keen for this arrangement to continue and would like to encourage their older students to be good role models for the middle school learners.

Although not many of them do so, the sixth form students can leave the site during the day when not in a timetabled lesson or study period, so access arrangements for them will need to be considered.

4.7 Dining and Breaktimes

The schools' current arrangements for dining are far from ideal, with the single main hall being used for both dining/breaks and assemblies every day for both schools. As the high school morning assembly ends, the chairs are put away and rearranged to create a social space for refreshments to be served at breaktime for Astley. As soon as breaktime ends, the hall is rearranged once again to create a formal dining setting with chairs and tables arranged within the space.

Breaktime for Whytrig runs at the same time as Astley and is very well organised, with all pupils making use of the extensive outdoor space, with a variety of activities taking place from the use of the active trim trail and ball games to young people sitting quietly in groups or individually. Unless it is raining, all pupils move outside during their break. There is a break time 'snack trolley' which comes over from the central shared kitchen and the young people queue up sensibly to purchase any break time snacks using the biometric cashless catering system that is in place across the site. This arrangement is likely to continue but with pupils accessing the snack trolley in their hall rather than outside.

Due to the limited facilities on site currently, dining is quite a complex operation for both schools. Whytrig have their lunch first, with young people either collecting their packed lunches from the secure storage areas or queuing sensibly to be served a meal. As the children finish their meals, they move outside to the tennis courts where they are closely supervised. They are all escorted back to the middle school external area for the last ten minutes of their lunchtime.

The first of two Astley lunch sittings begin just as the middle school are finishing, with the high school students gradually arriving and queuing for their lunch. Once they have eaten, students have access to a number of external areas around the site and after 35-minutes they all return to continue their lessons. The second group of high school students then arrive for another 35-minute lunch time.

Although it may sound complicated, lunchtime works very well across the Schools, with a smaller manageable number of learners dining on each sitting, making for a calm atmosphere. The Schools would therefore like dining to continue to operate in a similar way, but it is crucial that it takes place in a dedicated dining environment that is fit for purpose and will enable the lunch offer to be greatly improved. There will be one shared kitchen with one team of catering staff. This central dining area should be a destination, not a thoroughfare, and should not be visible to visitors as they arrive at the schools.

As well as continuing to have their own dedicated café area within the sixth form centre, sixth form students will also be able to access the main dining area throughout the serving period.

The vast majority of students will have their lunch on site, with only the sixth form students being allowed to leave the premises to go and eat elsewhere. Not many of the older students choose to take advantage of this option, and it is expected that with much improved facilities, this will happen even less frequently.

All of the pupils from Whytrig come and sit down in the hall for their dining time. They arrive a year group at a time and once they have all got their lunch and sat down, the next year group arrives (90 per year group). The numbers for Astley are higher, with approximately 200 students arriving at a time to get their lunch and move through the dining area. There are currently 240 seats set up in the dining area and it is anticipated that this number would continue to be about right moving forward. The new dining facility should support these numbers comfortably.

The dining area will link directly with the external space, offering an opportunity for outdoor dining and it will not be an empty area during session times. It will be used as an informal study area by sixth form students, as well as other individuals and small groups working on a task, or for intervention groups working with a learning support colleague. It will also be used by staff who choose to work in here during their non-contact time or by staff having informal meetings.

The sixth form will continue to have its own dining offer with café 6 being available for a large part of the day. Café 6 is a more mature area, with some staff also choosing to use this facility for their lunch. Although this area should be a distinct and special area for the 6th form, there may be opportunities for this to link with the main dining space.

4.8 Halls and Performance

Unlike currently, there will be two separate main halls on the site, one for Whytrig and one for Astley. This will be in addition to the shared dedicated dining area. This will ensure that both schools have the freedom to run their assemblies and other school events whenever they choose to, rather than all having to share one hall for everything.

The main halls will be used daily for assemblies by each school, for both individual year groups and larger school gatherings. The Astley hall will host full year group assemblies each day, with all of the sixth form having a joint assembly. This means that the hall will need to be able to accommodate up to 200 high school students plus staff, at any one time. The Whytrig hall will accommodate at least one

full year group of 90 young people. Whytrig have two whole school assemblies each week and consideration should be given as to where these will take place. When the school reaches its maximum capacity, this will be for 360 middle school children.

Whytrig will also make use of their new hall to support the PE and music curriculum and the flooring in this area will therefore need to be carefully considered.

Ideally the main halls and other spaces will be available for formal exams so that the sports hall is not out of action for the long summer exam period, but the school is aware that this may not be possible, depending on the amount of area allocated to these spaces. Due to there being both GCSE and A level exams taking place each summer, the maximum number of learners who will need to be accommodated in any one exam sitting could be as high as 150 students, based on the current PAN.

Regardless of where the exams will take place, consideration must be given to how the exam desks and chairs are stored. They are currently stored in a standalone container outside, and it is desirable for this to be removed.

In addition to assemblies and exams, the halls will also be used for a number of other activities both during and outside of the main school day, including performing arts lessons, including some music, school performances and regular celebration events. Should drama be reintroduced to the curriculum in either school, the halls will also support this. They will also continue to be used by the community for a variety of activities and clubs such as Slimming World and the Blyth Lifeguard club.

The dining area is likely to be adjacent to the main performance hall to ensure that refreshments can be easily provided before and after the performances.

The smaller hall in Whytrig may also be used by the sixth form to enable them to have larger lectures in a formal setting or for careers talks or events. It is also likely to be used for staff briefings twice a week, offering a much more suitable venue than the staff room, which is used currently. This new space for Whytrig also provides the middle school with an opportunity to use it for music lessons for Y5 and Y6, or for PE. Storage will therefore need to be considered for this space.

The main hall in Astley may also be used to support the music curriculum, especially when the samba drums are required. Storage for these will need to be carefully planned.

Both halls will include retractable bleacher seating and there will be an area in at least one hall which will accommodate mobile staging, should this be appropriate.

4.9 Learning Resource Centre(s)/Libraries

Whytrig and Astley Schools currently share one library and this arrangement works well. There will continue to be one shared library for both schools and this will need to be located as centrally as possible. The local community library is also currently based on the site, but it is uncertain as to whether this will continue moving forward.

Access to the library must be carefully considered as it will be a resource for both Schools and must therefore be seen as such.

The library will be used for timetabled library lessons for Y9 students and will therefore need to include an area which is suitable for this. There will need to be some access to ICT which will be available to all

students and staff but will be particularly useful to sixth form students who may choose to use the library as their work base when they are not in formal lessons.

The library is also currently used by sixth form students who are directed to study in here during their independent study time and there will need to be plenty of quiet workspace to accommodate these learners.

The dedicated sixth form study area will ideally be adjacent to the library so that these two spaces can complement each other. It would also be sensible for the World of Work faculty to be in close proximity given that this is a busy area for post 16 students.

4.10 SEND and Support for Learning

Whytrig and Astley both have SEND teams who are central to student support at the Schools. For Astley this team is currently based in 'The Bungalow' and for Whytrig, they are based in a central area. In the future there will continue to be dedicated SEND hub for each School, but ideally they will be adjacent and any associated office accommodation for the SENDCos or other colleagues will be positioned in between the two 'hubs' to facilitate and encourage cross team working and strategy sharing.

It will also be sensible for the SEND hubs to be positioned next to the new Additionally Resourced Provision as there will be a crossover of staff. The adjacency between the Astley ARP and SEND hubs is especially important.

There will need to be a staff work room included as part of the SEND hub for Astley to support the work of the teaching and learning assistants in particular, but also to give the staff in this faculty a base in the same way that all other faculties have a base. This will also remove the need for lockers for these colleagues to be provided in the staff social room.

Whilst the majority of support for learning for individual students happens within the classroom areas, there are still a number of additional interventions which will take place in the SEND hubs. These include reading and writing intervention, and some general support for the more vulnerable students.

In Astley, this more general support will also include providing the young people with a safe calming relaxation space, as well as a small kitchen for them to make and/or eat their lunch, away from the busy main dining areas. There should also be access to a WC in the SEND hub for Astley.

There is a well-attended breakfast club which is available for some learners and this currently happens in the food technology room each morning. Whilst this is mainly attended by Whytrig students, there are some Y9 learners who also access this provision, especially when they first move to the high school. It may be appropriate for this activity to continue to happen in the food room, or there may be a more appropriate space in the future. Access should therefore be considered.

The SEND hub for Whytrig is really just one larger space which can then be subdivided into smaller areas should this be required. It needs to be flexible to allow for different arrangements.

In addition to the SEND hubs, both schools will benefit from having additional ad hoc areas which could be used by learners, either with or without support. These may be the group rooms associated with some of the faculties or they could be the smaller informal areas just outside the Y5 and Y6 class bases, which will double up as intervention spaces.

There will be a completely separate inclusion room for Astley and it is very important that this is not located within or even close to the SEND hub. It must not be seen as related, as its purpose is completely different and very focused on supporting learners who are having some challenges with their behaviours in the short term. This inclusion room will form part of the Pastoral Hub in Astley.

There will be two hygiene rooms for the schools, affording access for learners of all ages. One of these should be with the shared medical room, close to or as part of the main admin and reception area as it is colleagues working in this area who have responsibilities linked to some of these young people. The medical room will also work as a sick room for students who are unwell during the school day and may be waiting to be collected by a parent or carer, so a 'front of house' location would be most appropriate.

4.11 Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP)

There is a 10 place ARP associated with Astley and this is predominantly for Y7 to Y11 learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who struggle with a mainstream setting, although over time it is hoped that post 16 learners could also be accommodated here. This provision is currently being piloted at Astley and whilst it is for ten young people initially, it should have the capacity to increase in size to twenty students over time.

Opening in temporary accommodation in September 2021, the ARP is still in its early stages of development. It is however, already proving to be successful for the learners who are attending, with one student who had always disliked PE now volunteering to be captain of the football team. Having only just opened, there is already a planned intake of eight learners for 2022.

Autistic spectrum disorder is a term which recognises that there are a number of sub-groups within the spectrum of autism. Students with autistic spectrum disorder find it difficult to understand and use non-verbal and verbal communication; understand social behaviour – which effects their ability to interact with other young people and adults; think and behave flexibly – which may be shown in restricted, obsessional or repetitive activities. Some students with ASD may also have learning disabilities or other difficulties, often making diagnosis difficult.

Spaces that are designed for young people with ASD are generally felt to be suitable for most learners with any other type of special need. Group sizes should be no larger than eight students and as well as the main class bases, there should also be an opportunity for withdrawal rooms and calming spaces. Spaces should be uncluttered and the materials for the spaces in the ARP will need to be very carefully considered. Curves are always welcome to learners with ASD as they appear to be more welcoming.

There will be a crossover of staff between the SEND hub for Astley and the ARP and the location of this provision therefore needs to be very carefully considered, ideally with a strong adjacency. It is important to note that the ARP is separate provision, however, and should not be combined with the SEND hubs.

Access to the ARP must be very carefully considered as young people with ASD appreciate short travel distances and drop off and pick up at the start and end of each day will be important. It is likely that the most suitable location for the ARP, therefore, will be close to a drop off point. Young people who are based in the ARP will still access mainstream learning for up to 80% of the time, so the route through to other areas of the Schools will need to be planned.

The ARP will need to include two smaller class bases, two withdrawal rooms and three smaller group rooms as a minimum for the students. One of the small group rooms will be used as a sensory space.

There should also be a reasonably generous breakout and life skills area which could also be used as a café and staff area. Toilet provision should be dedicated to this area and will need to consist of individual cubicles which include their own hand wash basins. There should also be a hygiene room within this provision.

There should also be access to a dedicated outdoor calming space for the young people who are based in the ARP and the landscaping design of this area will be important. Horticulture is a great opportunity for learners with ASD and can support the creation of sequences for them, for example grow the carrot, pick the carrot, move inside to prepare the carrot, eat the carrot. This could be something to consider within the dedicated external area for the ARP.

4.12 Staff and Administration Accommodation

There will be one central staff social room for colleagues from both schools to use, mainly before and after school, and at breaks and lunchtimes, although some staff may also choose to use this space at other times during the day when they are not teaching. It is very important that this space is included as centrally as possible, as currently the Whytrig staff tend not to use the provision as it is located within the high school and is 'too far away' for them to get to quickly.

Unlike in many other schools, the staff social room is a very well used space, with 60% and 72% of the staff using it at break and lunchtimes respectively. Although lunchtime is split for the schools, this will mean that the social space will need to accommodate up to approximately 60 staff at any one time, making use of soft informal seating and coffee tables. This social space will not be used as a working area as staff will be expected to use their dedicated faculty staff work rooms for this. There will need to be a kitchen area in this space to allow staff to prepare refreshments easily.

Although not a formal working space, there will be a small admin area as part of the social staff room, which will accommodate a multi-functional device or photocopier as these will not be provided in the staff work rooms, other than the Whytrig work room. Other than the main reprographics area, located with the main admin and general office suite, there will be very few additional multi-functional devices. There will be one in the main reception area, one in the staff social area, one in the art and technology faculty and one in the library, which students can also access. Staff and students are allocated printing and photocopying credits and once they have sent something to print, they will use their identification badge to collect it from the device.

The staff room is currently used for staff briefings twice a week as the only suitable venue, but in the future, these are likely to take place in one of the halls, making use of the bleacher seating provided.

Staff Work Rooms

There will be one staff work base for colleagues in Whytrig to use for planning and assessment and this space could be large enough to double up as a meeting space. There should also be a small provision of fixed ICT in this space for colleagues to use, should they not have their own machines.

Similarly, each faculty (except social sciences) in Astley will have a dedicated staff work area. These work bases will also include an element of storage and must be of high quality as colleagues will be expected to spend most of their non-contact time in here, as they will no longer have access to their 'own' classroom. There will not be a requirement for a kitchenette in these areas as refreshments will be available in the staff social area and the dining space.

These work areas will be very transparent and will be immediately adjacent to any circulation areas, providing a further opportunity for passive supervision. The transparency of these areas will also mean that the young people will be able to see into them and see their teachers and support colleagues working and learning, acting as positive role models and leading by example.

As well as being large enough to accommodate some general resource storage for the faculties, these staff work rooms may also need to accommodate one or more laptop/Chrome book charging trolleys.

General Admin Area

There will be one main administration area positioned by the main public entrance for the Schools. Most admin colleagues will be based in this area including the finance team, the exams and data team and the PA. The current thinking is that this will be one large space to accommodate approximately 12 colleagues, working in an open plan environment. As the project progresses, however, there may be a need for this larger area to become a number of slightly smaller office and workspaces.

This will be the public front to the school, with reception colleagues based here, but it will also have a student access point, where students can access finance or exams colleagues, for example.

To support colleagues working in this busy environment, a smaller 'quiet' space should be available around this area to enable colleagues to have a private conversation when appropriate. This could be an additional interview room within the admin suite. The reprographics space will also be in this area as it is the admin colleagues who manage this provision.

The secure exams store will be close to this area but must adhere to the JCQ exam guidelines. Exam colleagues based in the main office will need to have access to a quiet sorting space close to the exams store; this could be the small quiet space/interview room, as long as it is in close proximity.

This 'front of house' area will include a conference/meeting room facility which can be used for team meetings, governor meetings and smaller training activities for groups of staff. This should be able to accommodate up to ten people. There will also be a smaller interview room within this area for small meetings between a parent/carer, a student and a member of staff, for example. An accessible WC should be nearby for use by office staff and visitors.

There will be a separate two-person office for the HR team and this space must include a generous allowance for storage as all personnel files will need to be stored in here (or in a dedicated adjacent storeroom). There will also be separate offices for the Business Manager (BM) and the Business Support/Community Officer. The location of these three offices is fairly flexible, but ideally the HR and BM will be close to the main admin team. The Business/Community Officer could be positioned with PE to support the use of these facilities by the community out of hours, but this is not essential.

Senior Team

There will be several smaller offices for senior colleagues across both schools. These will include a separate office for each head of School, located as centrally as possible within each organisation. These office spaces should also include an area for smaller meetings. There will be a similar office for the Executive Headteacher, located as centrally as possible to both schools. There is one PA who is a shared resource for all three of these colleagues and they should be based within the main reception suite, as part of the general office.

A new assistant headteacher has recently been appointed by the Federation with a responsibility for the ARP and SEND. This colleague will be based in Whytrig.

There is an assistant head who has responsibility for the sixth form and there will need to be an office included for this colleague within the sixth form area. There will also be a shared office space adjacent to the assistant head for sixth form, which will accommodate the sixth form Student Progress Leader, the sixth form Pupil Support Worker (PSW) and the Information, Advice and Guidance lead for Astley.

There will also need to be a further SLT office at Astley for three people. This will be used by the associate SLT colleagues but will also be available should another assistant head be appointed in the future as the schools reach their full capacity.

Pastoral Team

There will be a dedicated Pastoral Hub for Astley, located centrally to enable all high school students to access it easily and this will include three small office spaces for the three Student Progress Leaders for Y9 to Y11, an office for the two Pastoral Support Workers, the inclusion room and a small calming space for students who are anxious or nervous and just need somewhere to sit for a short period of time. The high school counsellor will also be based in this area.

For Whytrig, there will be one pastoral support office for the Pastoral Support Worker, ideally located adjacent to a small interview room to facilitate meetings with pupils and parents/carers; if this is not possible then they should at least have a small meeting area as part of their office. The middle school counsellor will also be based in this area, possibly making use of any interview room that is provided for the Pastoral Support Worker.

SEND Hubs

Within the SEND hubs for each school, there will be an office space for the SENDCo and a separate space for the SEN Admin and support colleague to be based. The SEND hub for Astley will also include a staff work room for these colleagues.

Site Team

Although the site manager will be based in the general office, there will need to be a small workshop space for the caretaking and maintenance team to use. The location of this is not crucial, but perhaps an adjacency with resistant materials could be appropriate.

Both Schools would like to see more staff cycling to work and this would be greatly encouraged if there was an appropriate staff shower and changing facility available for use.

4.13 Storage

Every student in Whytrig currently has a locker, but this will change in the future. Pupils in Y5 and Y6 will no longer need a locker as there will be some built in wardrobe storage included in each of their classrooms. Students in Y7 and Y8, however, will continue to need to access an individual locker and the location of these will need to be carefully considered in the middle school.

Not every student in Astley will have a locker and the current arrangement works well, with students choosing whether or not they would like a locker and paying a £5 deposit at the start of Y9 for this

provision. Providing they do not lose their key or damage the locker in any way, this deposit is then returned to them when they leave high school.

Space for approximately 500 lockers will be required at Astley and the location of these will need to be carefully considered during the design process. The majority of lockers are currently grouped together within the pastoral hub and the school would like to see this change moving forward, so that large numbers of students are not gathered together at the start and end of each day.

The schools do not wish to see large numbers of store cupboards for key stages or faculties and instead would like to see some generous storage being built into the new staff work areas. This storage will be for resources shared across the faculty, such as graphical calculators, for example. There are some exceptions to this in for example the arts and technology faculty, where storage for materials and resources will be required in a separate store cupboard or English, where the amount of set texts to be studied is ever increasing.

Consideration will need to be given to the storage and charging of the many laptop and Chromebook charging trolleys that are in constant use at both schools (currently six laptop trolleys and eight Chromebook trolleys).

Whilst the Schools do not want to over provide unnecessary storage areas, they do want to ensure that there is adequate storage within each classroom space. Ideally there will be a fitted storage/wardrobe solution in every learning space, possibly with the exception of science, art and technology as plenty of alternative storage will be provided around these learning spaces. These fitted solutions would also provide additional opportunities for notice boards and white boards to be incorporated into the doors.

4.14 Toilets

Toilets should be dispersed around the buildings, with as much supporting passive supervision as possible, whether from staff work bases, senior team offices or from circulation and breakout areas.

Toilets should be open plan as far as practicable with individual cubicles positioned either side of a shared hand wash facility. The cubicles are likely to be designated male or female, but they will be designed initially to be unisex, so that the Schools can decide exactly how they will manage them in the future.

Staff will use the accessible WCs which will also be dispersed around the buildings. These toilets will also be available for transgender and gender fluid students to use.

4.15 Entrances and Circulation

There are currently two reception areas on site, one for each school. Whytrig reception is open at the start and finish of the school day for any parents dropping off or picking up children who wish to speak with a member of staff. The Astley reception is open throughout the day. The Schools would like this arrangement to continue as it is important for parents and carers of the younger learners, especially the new starters in Y5, to feel as though they are bringing their children to a middle school.

Once the school day begins, the Whytrig reception point closes and all visitors to the site need to report to the main Astley reception. This also becomes the only arrival and exit point for all staff and students, including late comers or any students leaving with sickness or for appointments.

This arrangement took a while for Whytrig parents and carers to get used to, but it now works well and is something that the Schools would be keen to continue with moving forward.

At the start and end of the day, these two reception/entrance areas will not be the main ones used by the young people and there will need to be a number of other entry and exit points around the buildings for this purpose. These all need to be behind the secure line, so that once the school day starts, the buildings can be made completely secure. These entry points will also be used by students to access their external learning and social areas easily.

Circulation areas will be generous, and some will need to accommodate lockers, whilst still feeling spacious. The Schools would also like to see several digital display points around the site, with some in reception areas, but also within circulation routes where appropriate. These screens will be used to share information with students about attendance, merit points or meetings, for example, but also to show the national news, display photos of celebrations and achievements, or to remind students of a learning focus for the week. They could also be used to promote sustainable methods of travel to school. The location of these screens should be carefully considered as the infrastructure will need to be included for them.

5 External Space

The external areas for each School will need to be carefully considered and designed to meet the needs of the Schools and the wider community.

5.1 Sports

Astley High School has a good reputation, both locally and beyond, for its sports teams and individuals, with examples of this being particularly notable in girl's rugby league where the school team have reached the final of the Champion Schools National Finals on several occasions in recent years. One former student has recently become a professional rugby league player. The sport is also successful at Whytrig with their Y7 Girls Rugby League Team winning the regional finals recently.

It is very important, therefore, that the facilities to support the development of rugby league are not diminished during the project and enhanced wherever possible.

Several external organisations and groups use the sports facilities on site, particularly for football and there is a high demand for a floodlit 3G artificial grass pitch (AGP) in the local area. This will be included as part of the development of the sports facilities for the Schools.

The sports facilities, both internal and external, will be predominantly used by Whytrig and Astley during the day with the community accessing them out of hours. Internal sports provision will include a sports hall, an activity studio, a fitness suite and a swimming pool. External provision will include multi use games areas for various sports including netball and tennis, playing fields for rugby league, football (11v11 and 7v7/5v5) and hockey and a 3G artificial grass pitch which will be flood lit. Rounders and athletics will also need to be accommodated during the summer period, including for both track and field, such as long jump. It should be possible to support the development of cricket on site, but this is not as important as the other sports within the curriculum and priority should not be given to including a cricket wicket at the expense of other facilities.

5.2 Learning Areas

Learning outside of the classroom and particularly outdoors is something which Whytrig wishes to improve for their young people. They are currently exploring the possibility of introducing Forest Schools but would also like to enhance the outdoor learning experience for young people in all subjects. Maths and art are the curriculum areas which currently make some good use of the external space on an ad hoc basis, but colleagues would welcome some support to help them further develop outdoor learning across the curriculum.

There is a gardening club which is popular for the younger learners and an area for this to continue to develop will be beneficial, ideally with the inclusion of a greenhouse. The existing trim trail is well used by the middle school, both formally and informally, and a similar area should be created in any new development.

Other than for PE, the external areas are less well used by Astley to support the curriculum, other than on a very ad hoc basis. There may be some interest from science to develop an external area and this should be further explored throughout the design development process.

It is desirable for Y5 and Y6 learners to have direct access to some external space from their class bases, as this is likely to encourage staff and pupils to use the space more extensively.

Consideration should also be given to the development of a dedicated external learning area for the Additional Resourced Provision that will be included on site. It may be appropriate to include an area for horticulture within this space.

Appropriate fit for purpose seating should be considered for each of these learning areas.

5.3 Informal and Social Areas

Breaktime for Whytrig runs at the same time as Astley and is very well organised, with all Whytrig pupils making use of their dedicated outdoor space, with a variety of activities taking place from the use of the active trim trail and ball games, to young people sitting quietly in groups or individually. Unless it is raining, all pupils move outside during their break. There is no separation of KS2 (Y5/Y6) and KS3 (Y7/Y8) and there is no desire for this to change moving forward as the students all mix very well. Something similar to this mixed activity area is what is required in the future for the middle school.

A 'butterfly garden' has also recently been created by some parent volunteers in memory of a pupil at Whytrig and it will be important for this to be replicated for use as a quiet reflective space.

There is currently a break time 'snack trolley' which comes over from the central shared kitchen and the young people queue up sensibly to purchase any break time snacks using the biometric cashless catering system that is in place across the site. It is anticipated that this will not be replicated in the new development as Whytrig will be able to make use of their dedicated hall for this, but this should be checked moving forward as it may be helpful to have the option to facilitate this.

Students at Astley make use of several external areas during breaks and lunchtimes. The majority of Y9 to Y11 initially gather in the main hall/dining area where they can buy refreshments and then either stay in there or move outside in small groups for the remainder of their free time. Students currently access the hard-standing areas or a variety of more softly landscaped areas, such as one of the quieter

quadrangles which hosts a fabulous rugby sculpture to honour the memory of a former student. This will need to be carefully relocated.

High school students generally take responsibility for their own decisions about which areas to access at lunch and break times, within set boundaries, and it is desirable for this to continue in the future, so it will be important for a variety of different external spaces to be included within the site. Supervision of these will need to be considered.

There will be an outdoor dining area which will be directly accessible from the internal dining space for use by both schools. This area will include some outdoor dining furniture. Additional informal external seating should be incorporated across the site to support break and lunchtimes.

There will be an external social area available for sixth form which will preferably be adjacent to their internal social and/or study spaces. Sixth form students will be able to access this area during the day, giving them an opportunity to study quietly outside in more pleasant weather. It may be appropriate for this to be an extension of the main external dining area.

5.4 Access, Parking and Drop Off

The current site has one vehicular access route for all vehicles to either Astley or Whytrig Schools. This works well and it is not seen as necessary to introduce an additional vehicular access, if this can be avoided. The same will be true on any other site.

There is one 60-seater school bus currently for those young people travelling from Seaton Sluice and New Hartley as the walking route from these areas is deemed to be unsafe, mainly due to insufficient lighting. The bus currently utilises the public bus stop on the main road for drop off and pick up, but the Schools would like to be able to accommodate this on site in the future, as this would offer a safer access for these students.

An alternative to onsite coach drop-off could be the provision of a lay-by on the main road, whether that be Elsdon Avenue or elsewhere. This space would also then be able to accommodate the coaches that bring pupils from other first and middle schools onto site to make use of the swimming pool during the day. Over 80 learners use a public bus service to get to and from school, so the main 'on road' bus stop will continue to be used in the future.

Other than this, private coaches are used only occasionally for school trips, so it will not be necessary to accommodate larger numbers of these on site, unless the intake altered over time and more young people were to arrive by private bus.

Approximately 21% of students are dropped off at present and this does cause some issues around the current site, with parents and carers parking on the zig zag lines. Ideally this should be resolved as part of the new development. A small number (currently 7) of students are dropped off and picked up by taxis and this also causes some issues, particularly at the end of the day, when the taxis are waiting from 2pm onwards. It would be very helpful to the Schools if this could be resolved moving forwards.

Some of the Whytrig parents and carers, particularly of Y5 learners, walk to school to drop off or collect their children. At the moment, they gather on the path just outside the middle school entrance and it may be sensible to look at introducing some sort of gathering area on site for this purpose.

About 14% (40) of the pupils from Whytrig use a scooter or skateboard to travel to school and consideration should be given to where these are stored during the day. Only about 5% of learners from both schools arrive by bicycle, which currently equates to 45 students, but provision will need to be included for a growing number of bikes on site, including for staff. A small number of staff and students travel by motorbike and space will need to be provided for them to park.

Ideally, there will be one main car park for staff and sixth form students, possibly with a designated area for visitors, although the school would like a fairly fluid arrangement so that visitors are not struggling to find a parking space on site. Parking should be provided to Northumberland County Council standards for staff and visitors. Parking will also need to be included for two school minibuses.

There should be a clear separation between pedestrians and vehicles upon arrival and it will be important that learners from each school move towards their own dedicated arrival areas and entrances at the start of each day. There will be separate entrances into the buildings for Whytrig and Astley students. In addition, there will be one main public entrance for all other pedestrian access during the day.

Community access is likely to be predominantly to the sports facilities and an access point or community entrance should facilitate this.

5.5 Safety and Security

There are a number of safeguarding issues on and around the current site which will need to be addressed as part of the project. The Schools need to be able to ensure that all areas that can be accessed throughout the day by learners cannot be accessed by the public, unless they are accompanied by a member of staff.

Out of hours and once any community use of the facilities has finished, the schools would like to be able to secure the site completely.

