

SSAT and Dulux Smarter Spaces Project – end of project report

School Name: Lordswood Girls School

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Brief description of type of room/space:

- Referred to as S1. Located on the second floor of the school.
- An old Design Technology and Textiles room but no longer needed by the department. Despite this only 16 lessons of DT and Textiles were taught over a two-week cycle of 50 lessons.
- The room was used by a number of different other subjects, such as Mathematics, RE, History, Spanish and Sport Studies.
- Different aspects of the room limited teaching and learning for most subjects that taught in the room.
- It is now needed as a multi-use classroom for all subjects to be able to teach effectively in it.

Overview

LGS envisaged that the Smarter Spaces transformation of the room would make the room more accessible to allow all subjects to teach in. The impact expected was that the room was to be transformed to become a multi-functional room allowing a variety of different subjects to teach effectively in the classroom. We envisaged smarter storage solutions to maximise the space in the room.

The original room posed many challenges to the learning of the students and the teaching of the teachers. The room originally catered to the teaching of Textiles and Design Technology only and this meant that there were many large cupboards, large tables and a large sink present in the room. The classroom previously (as seen in the photos) is an L shaped room with under-utilised storage cupboards that impede teachers from circulating the room effectively around the classroom. The format of the room limits the creativity of lesson activities and restricts the opportunities for kinaesthetic and collaborative learning. The position of the whiteboard made it difficult for some students to view it, depending on where they were seated. The students were seated on stools instead of chairs which made longer lessons uncomfortable. The displays in the room are limited to DT and are not accessible by all subjects to accelerate learning and support teaching. However, after viewing the timetable it came to light that many subjects taught in this classroom not just Textiles or Design Technology.

The staff who taught in the classroom set up a Policy and Practice group and met when allocated time was given to discuss how the room could improve teaching and learning in the room. This involved seven teachers from different subjects. The students who had lessons in the classroom were involved and their opinions and ideas were expressed through a student questionnaire.

The results of the transformation of the room meet the expectations we had in overcoming the challenges posed in the room. The room is now a multi-functional room, in which various subjects teach in. The new transformed space is a lot more spacious allowing more collaborative activities and independent tasks to be incorporated. The removal of the storage cupboards and smaller round tables had made the room capacious which gives freedom to conduct kinaesthetic activities. The whiteboard has been placed on the opposite of the room allowing its access to all students. The new chairs provide comfortable seating for the students in comparison to the previous stools with no backrest support. It is

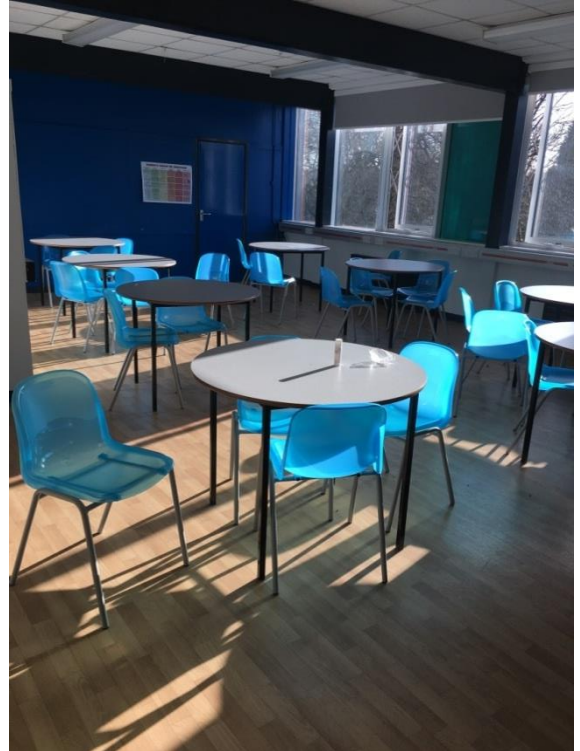
also going to become the hub for the TEEP teaching style in the coming September. Teachers will now be able to discuss and plan TEEP lessons using the space.

Enhance the teaching and learning environment

Before the transformation



After the transformation



The school has not previously invested in creating new revenue opportunities in relation to this room so comparisons cannot be made.

Inspiring engagement

Teachers who taught in this class were involved as part of a research group. Students were engaged in the design process via questionnaires.

Students were provided with a questionnaire that consisted of eight questions:

- 1) Do you feel stimulated in the room?
- 2) Can you see the board clearly?
- 3) Can you hear the teacher clearly?
- 4) Can you move around the room easily?
- 5) Do you think the room is tidy?
- 6) How well do you think this room impacts your learning?
- 7) How do you think this room could be improved?
- 8) What features do you think must remain?

Their opinions about the room and ideas about how to improve the room was collated and formed the basis of the design plans put forward. Staff members who taught in the classroom from various subject backgrounds formed part of a PPG (policy and practice group) that researched into improving the space.

The group occasionally met to discuss different designs and attended update meetings led by lead practitioners.

To ensure consistency student and teacher questionnaires were distributed to all classes being taught in the new transformed room and formed the basis of how to measure the impact on teaching and learning. The feedback from these questionnaires has been referenced throughout the methodology and final report.

There is no financial benefit in investing in Smarter Spaces. The benefit of the Smart Space is more related to teaching and learning.

Encourage positive attitude and behaviour

The smarter space has helped raise the aspirations of teachers and students. Teacher's aspirations have been raised, as they now have a more comfortable and spacious classroom where they can trial different learning styles and support the learning of the pupils further. One teacher commented in the questionnaire that being able to access all students due to the new round tables has improved their teaching significantly, as it was easier to circulate the room and support students accordingly.

Pupils are more comfortable in the space and have commented in their pupil questionnaires that they enjoy working in the room as they are "less squashed." More than half of the students who responded to the questionnaire commented that they noticed an increase in more kinaesthetic and "active activities" in the classroom and looked forward to having lessons in the room due to this. Students also commented that the new round tables made it easier for them to work in groups and this promoted teamwork skills and a more inclusive learning atmosphere. This illustrates that the aspiration to make the room a suitable place for collaborative learning has been met.

In addition, some may argue that having chairs over stools has no real link to accelerated learning, however, providing students with chairs with back support is still eliminating any sort of uncomfortable experience and distraction, which surely can only improve the learning of students.

The space allows teachers to make varied choices in relation to their teaching and layout of their classroom. The design of the room has provided the teachers with more flexibility in arranging their classroom to personalise and cater to the needs of their individual groups. It also has broadened teachers' choice of activities and pedagogy, as they now have more space and tools to promote group and independent learning.

We have quotes from students and teachers who have lessons in the room as a measure of the impact.

A few questions and answers from the students questionnaire:

How well do you think the room impacts your learning?

"The room is less squashed and it makes it much easier to relax and concentrate on my work. When we had lessons in here last year we were always too hot and squashed." RE

"I was sat at the back and could never see the board and would always copy of my friends and it wasn't a nice environment. But now I can see the board clearly and work with my friend, which is way better than last year."

"The room is a lot bigger and spacious now and the teachers always do active and fun activities like treasure hunts and carousels which I really love. So the new layout of the room has made my lessons in S1 more fun and enjoyable. I look forward to the lessons that I have in here."

"I like the round tables because it makes it easier to work with others. When I am stuck on something I can ask my table for support and they always help me. We do a lot more group activities now on our tables and it make the lesson a lot more fun and easier to understand because GCSE's are hard and working with others it helpful."

"The round tables are good because I get to work with other people."

A few questions and answers from teachers:

How well do you think the room impacts your student's learning? Explain your answer please.

"There is more space and the new whiteboard allows for more interactive lessons, which has benefited the students learning. "

"Round tables are good for discussions though."

"I plan a lot of group work activities for my GCSE group as the classroom has the scope to do so, which a lot of students enjoy, particularly revision sessions."

Has the room impacted your teaching? Explain your answer please.

"Made it easier for me to include group work. Students can now do a lot more active activities and I don't have to worry about safety. "

"I like the fact that I have a lot more freedom with my seating plan. I have grouped certain students together to improve their learning. This makes it easier for me to include group and kinaesthetic activities into my lesson plans as I have the space and tables, so that's a bonus."

The testimonies collated from both, teachers and students, measure the different ways the Smarter Space design has impacted their learning and teaching.

The Smarter Space will be utilised from September 2018 onwards as a CPD (Continuous Professional Development) and training session room for teachers. Plans are also being put into place that the some extra-curricular clubs can take place in this room. However, due to the room being located on second floor of the school building it is sometimes more convenient to use ground floor rooms for external agencies.

Promote personal development and wellbeing

The design of the room has provided the teachers with more flexibility. This is within their teaching styles but also the logistics of the room. Teachers have the liberty to change the layout of the room to personalise and cater to the needs of their individual groups, which allows the teacher to promote the development and well-being of their particular class. It has also helped with the teacher's behaviour management as they now can trial different strategies utilising the room and are able to access all students ensuring they can keep on top of student's behaviour and completion of work.

In addition, as the classroom is now more spacious without the large storage cupboards and large class tables, students believed the classroom atmosphere was less asphyxiating. Students commented in their questionnaires that they felt more relaxed and “less squashed” and “a lot more space to do my own work” which stimulated a better working environment and also cultivated a good independent learning tone.

Some teachers were interviewed by the Lead Practitioner regarding how the room promoted personal development and wellbeing. Some teachers commented that the spacious nature of the room allows students who may have anxiety and behavioural issues to go work in a different area of the room or to even allow some students to ‘time-out’ and relax if they feel overwhelmed and this has aided their behaviour management in the classroom. The spacious room allows claustrophobic students to feel relaxed and remained focused.

Help improve building function

The space is able to accommodate many different organisational structures and pedagogies over time. The space has allowed teachers to adapt their teaching style to utilise the room to its advantage. For example, the room allows for many different group tasks and activities. The circular smaller tables allow scope for teachers to organise group revision tasks and class activities. The circular tables have made it a lot easier for teachers to access all students ensuring that they are on track and supported which in turn has resulted in better learning of the students and will impact on progress. The link between attainment and the Smarter Space is very difficult to measure, as the classes that take place in the room do not have all their subject lessons within Smarter Space.

Many teachers and students (via questionnaires) have commented that they the circular table have instigated a better working atmosphere as students feel that working together as a group on circular tables has allowed for a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere. This has resulted in better working relationships and behaviour in the class.

Additionally, the extra space in the room has also made kinaesthetic activities safer and enjoyable. Teachers have commented that planning kinaesthetic and physical activities have become a lot easier to plan and incorporate into different parts of the lesson. This has resulted in their teaching to improve, as they provide students with a variety of different teaching strategies and styles. The students have also commented that the amount of kinaesthetic and group activities they take part in the room has increased significantly since the transformation. This clearly indicates that the transformation of the room has made a positive impact on the teaching and learning of the participants of the room.

Despite the space being located on the second floor of the school building it is accessible by all students and teachers. It is clearly labelled and mapped out on parent and student friendly maps of the school on prospectuses to be used on events, such as open days and parents evenings.

The room does now allow for future expansion of the school. However, the room has inspired some ideas and plans to transform other rooms within the school with a similar design, if funding allows in the future.