

Editorial

It's been a while since last addition of Learning Spaces came out. In that time a significant number of things have happened in the educational world. First however, we are pleased to welcome Dr. Jenny Thomas as co-editor of Learning Spaces whilst Dr. Sharon Wright who previously performed this role takes a break to pursue other projects.

So the General Elections is now over and there is increased clarity and, it turns out, continuity to the education agenda. The increased commitment to Free Schools and Academies will doubtless provide focus and opportunity for many people and organisations. However, all of us engaged with helping design spaces in new build and expansion projects are very aware that we are frequently hampered in what can be done in designing new schools by restrictive building guidance. As a result some architects and designers consider that schools being developed under the new guidance are not fit for purpose.

It is not all bad news however. It is encouraging to see and hear about various local authorities, architects and contractors trying to ensure that they provide interesting, innovative and dynamic learning environments for the young people in their communities. Where this passion exists, there is enthusiasm and genuine interest to maximise the opportunities for interesting design – and so there should be.

In this edition, we are pleased to read about Ian Wilson discussing a potential design solution that provides all the benefits of repetition and standardisation but still allows for different solutions from standard school designs. Integration is always challenging - we are delighted to include an article about Heartlands High School and their work in integrating an autistic provision in their school, as well as a special feature on outdoor learning solutions. We explore the work of Hackney Pirates on supporting learning and the Marine Academy in Plymouth. On a regulatory note, we are pleased to publish an article by Louise Hosking on the new safety legislation that will affect all schools in control of their own building.

We would genuinely love to hear from all those involved in exciting education projects who would like to share your views, showcase your projects, and tell us about your experiences. We always need new stories for Learning Spaces – please contact us if you would like to contribute an article.

In the meantime, let's keep focusing on trying to create exciting learning spaces!

Have a great summer!

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