

FREQUENT ASKED QUESTIONS

October 2022

PARENT QUESTIONS

Would the space also work for younger students (Y1 – 4) or are more traditional classes better for them? i.e. would a new school be entirely MLE design?

We believe any age group would / could work in the new design, as is seen across NZ currently. One of the reasons for going for the Year 5 and 6 students was the location of the build in relation to the Junior playground and the smaller toilets in that area. Also, the Rooms 1 to 12 (Year 1 and 2 area) are actually quite small in size compare to others in the school, which is partially why we have the decks outside the rooms and moved the bags outside to increase the spaces.

If the MOE ever decided to re-build Browns Bay School, then the design would include MLE design criteria – flexibility, variable space, indoor – outdoor connection, acoustics, lighting, heating etc.

With MLE's having been used overseas for a while and now being moved away from – is this MLE different to those that they are now not using?

The experience I have had involving overseas MLE's was in Australia when I visited schools as part of a Conference. The designs were similar to some of those we saw when we toured local and national NZ schools as part of our initial investigation. One thing that we discovered was that the designs are all quite specific to the schools and used by teachers in quite different ways.

Our MLE is specific to our school and is quite different to others. The design involved BBS teachers and architects together to ensure we achieved a balance of flexible spaces for the various activities children do in a classroom within the design criteria of the MOE. The MLE we have built has the flexibility of large spaces (e.g. Maker Space) for creating and doing; while we also have the small personal spaces (e.g. Breakout Room / Booths) for the individual work. This idea was central to our design. We have also been really impressed with the acoustics in the build.

Also, in our investigations we learnt that teachers needed professional training in working in these spaces and that has been quite a focus over the past three years. The teachers are developing their practice in the new build as they learn how to use the rooms for best use.

I am unsure why some overseas schools are moving away from the MLE concept as I have not been made aware of this trend. Our MLE is unique to BBS and we believe with the ongoing Professional Development for our teachers we will continue to adapt and use its possibilities for the children of each year group.

My boy in Year 5 loves the new classroom as he gets to know everyone with combination with another class means around 50 students together. My son said because with too many people he no longer wanted to put his hand up. He's a bit shy so how do you encourage students like him?

Teachers in all classes are aware of this potential issue with students who are hesitant in sharing their voice / view in class. Our teachers will notice and identify the hesitant children and encourage them into sharing without putting them under stress. The times we have two classes together are also balanced with individual discussion, group discussions and class discussions. Teachers also use strategies such as share with a partner or sit the child near them so they can just answer the teacher – the aim is not to increase the anxiety of the students and over time, they feel comfortable in sharing in larger groups.

If this is still a concern for your child, please share it with their teacher.

While “new” it is a rehash of 1970’s open plan classroom so student outcomes there is a lack of research on this refer article RNZ 24th February 2021 – MOE to monitor modern classroom noise. I would like information around the better outcomes for students.

As a teacher in an open plan classroom with Year 2 students from 1986 to 1987 (Papamoa School) I can assure you that the new building is totally different from those spaces. The 1970s build was a large square open building with no smaller rooms with limited acoustics. I also had very little professional development on how to use the space. The issues with those builds was a combination of no training and limited design knowledge – our teachers have had three years of professional support and the designs have improved a lot since then. Our design incorporates several small and medium size rooms to provide flexible spaces for teachers and students, as well as really good acoustics. The Browns Bay School design was also reviewed by the MOE Review Panel. This review was focused on ensuring that the acoustics meet the criteria as identified in the “Designing Quality Learning Spaces (DQLS) - Acoustics (2020).

In the RNZ article on classroom noise they mention a need for hard data and I agree it is timely for NZ to match the overseas research shared by Jo Robson in her presentation that noted “Well-designed learning environments boost children’s academic performance in

reading, writing and maths. Differences in the physical characteristics of classrooms explain 16% of the variation in learning progress over a year.” Barrett & Zhang (2015).

As a school we will continue to gather the information and monitor it to ensure better outcomes for all students.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

Are there any more room numbers?

Each teacher and class will have a room number given to them at the start of the year. The room numbers will not be on the walls as each level will be called a special name.

Level 1 will be Te Whenua / Land

Level 2 will be Te Ngahere / Forest

Where will our class be? Where are we working?

The Year 5 classes will be downstairs and the Year 6 classes will be upstairs.

Each class will have an area in the new Build that will be their “Class” area. In the morning and after each break each class will meet in that special area.

After meeting in that area you will then be given a choice to work in other parts of the building or sent to a breakout room to work.

Are we going to be in the same class?

Yes, you move into the new building with the same class as you are in now. Next year you will also be put into a class with a teacher.

Will we be in mixed classes? In the MLE will we be mixed up with other classes? Are we going to be working with other students and teachers?

The MLE will have four classes in each level in 2022. The classes will be Year 5 on Level 1 and Year 6 on Level 2. Each class will have its own home space on each floor yet students may work with other classes in the open areas.

You will work in your class groups most of the time yet the Building design allows the class groups to work together or apart. It will depend on the activity you are doing. Classes may

be mixed up with other classes during PE, Art, or Topic lessons - just like we do with Waterwise.

Will it be very noisy and distracting?

The MLE has been designed with the latest acoustic carpets and wall coverings to reduce noise. The design has also got small rooms and alcoves so students will not be distracted. Teachers will also make sure everyone respects each other's working needs - if you need to do a loud activity you could be asked to do it outside or in the Maker Space or in one of the small rooms.

How many rooms are there?

The design has capacity for six classes on each floor. The design has two medium size rooms and two large rooms separated by a large Maker Space. Each floor has five breakout rooms with two small focus cubicles.

The design allows for

- Teaching Spaces **of varying sizes**
- Arts and Technology Area – **Maker Space**
- **Calm focus areas** for sensory students and one on one teaching
- **Small Break out** rooms for small groups or 1:1
- **Large and medium teaching spaces** for class size groups
- Shared **collaborative** working space
- **Presentation space** to take 1 classroom



How many classrooms are there? How many kids are there going to be in the MLE?

12 classrooms with space for 360 children. In 2022 we will only have 200 children in the Building altogether 100 on each floor.

Will the furniture be there when we move?

Yes there will be furniture in there. The furniture will come from some of your classrooms, or will be bought brand new and some of the furniture is being built into the building. We are planning to put the new furniture in to the building the week before classes will move in. The furniture includes tote trays for every student, tall tables, small tables, cushions, sofas and built in seating.

Where is the play area? Where do we eat morning tea and lunch?

There is no designed play area for the Building. Outside the building there will be a large “tiger turf” area where you will eat morning tea and lunch.

Can you put a map on each floor so newcomers know the layout of the build?

Yes, that is a great idea.

Are the Year 4's going downstairs?

No, only Year 5 in 2022.

Will the Year 1, 2 and 3's move in with us?

No they will not move in with us - only Year 5 and 6 students in 2022.

Does everyone get a chance to go into the new building?

Yes, all students will get a chance to go into the new building.

Can we get a school pet?

An interesting question - I don't think so at the moment!

BUILDINGS QUESTIONS

Why are we having a new build anyway?

The new building is because our student numbers have grown and we were running out of classrooms. Over the years we have had to turn spare rooms into classrooms and using rented classrooms to fit everyone in. We also had four very old and broken classrooms that were demolished.

Of the 12 classrooms in the new building, eight are just replacing old classrooms. The other four classrooms will give us room for future students.

How long will the building take to finish and when? How long will it take to build?

The Building started in March 2021 and is expected to be finished in July 2022. The classes will move in during August 2022. It has taken 16 months to build.

Are you sure it is going to be done by Term 3 Week 3?

That is still the goal - hope to be Monday August 15. We moved in across the 15 - 19 August, 2022

What about the second floor – how is that planned out?

Both floors are planned the same way. The only differences are that Level 1 has a Disabled toilet and Level 2 has a larger Maker Space area.

Will there be trees?

We are planning to plant an orchard behind the Hall.

How many cars would be under the building?

24 car parks

Which is bigger the Hall or the MLE? How much room will there be?

The MLE is much bigger than the Hall. If you count both floors it has a total space of 1245 square metres compared to the Hall 717 square metres. The building is 40.9 metres long and 14 metres wide

Will we be allowed to go on the lift and can we go into the quiet room whenever?

You will have a chance to go in the lift but it will not be for regular use by students - you get fitter going up the stairs! The quiet rooms will be open for students yet sometimes groups might need them.

Is the MLE easy to get to by car?

Yes, cars will easily get to the MLE as we have a new paved pathway that goes up behind the Hall from the new car entrance. The car-park under the building also lets people come up to the building using a lift.

What is the biggest thing in the MLE?

The largest room in the MLE is the Level 2 Maker Space (101 square metres).

What will happen to the (old) buildings?

The old buildings on the field will be taken away by removal trucks in September. They will also take away Rooms 33 and 34. We will have eight classrooms taken away. This will be done at night.

Is the MLE fully electric?

Yes the MLE is fully electric. The MLE also uses natural ventilation through the double doors and high windows. There are heat pumps in all rooms and a modern computer infrastructure. The large windows allow for natural light and to see our amazing local landscape. We also encourage Conservation with water reticulation and power saving technology.

When will we see the Pool? When will it be completed?

The Pool is nearly finished now but we will need to paint it and get the shade up with seating. We are planning to use the pool in Term 4, 2022

How will you decorate the new build?

The Building will be painted the same white as the rest of the school.

How much did the building cost?

A lot of money - it had an original budget of \$8 million.

Will you make another pool? Will you make the pool deeper and bigger?

The pool is not being changed and will stay the same size.

The Pool Area will have new changing rooms, a shade sail and seating.

Where will we put our bags?

Bags will be able to hang up outside and there may be bag boxes inside the building as we have areas inside too.

Will you make more MLE?

We have no plans to make another MLE at the moment as we have enough classes for students as our roll grows

Will we be able to walk to the back of the building at school-time?

No this will be out of bounds unless you are with a teacher.