

NEW CHRIST CHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL, READING, RG2 0AY



Design & Planning Statement

Application for internal alterations and external improvements to the existing modular building to provide dedicated SEND facilities, including new toilets, breakout space, external access, raised external play area and increased boundary fencing

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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Site Setting & Surroundings
3. Design, Use & Amount
4. Planning Policy Compliance
5. Community Involvement Statement
6. Material Specifications
7. Conclusion

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of New Christ Church Primary School, owned by The Diocese of Oxford, to support an application for improvements to the existing modular building on the school site.
- 1.2. The proposal seeks to reconfigure part of the current library to provide essential facilities for eight pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND), including new toilet provision, a dedicated breakout room, direct external access, and a safe, level outdoor space. Minor external works include installing a new door, raising and levelling the adjacent external play area, and increasing boundary fence height for safeguarding.

2. Site Setting & Surroundings

- 2.1. New Christ Church Primary School is a one-form-entry primary school located in the Katesgrove ward of Reading, positioned at the end of Milman Road and the corner of Spring Gardens. The school sits within a dense residential neighbourhood of Victorian terraced streets, with a modern housing development situated immediately to the north.
- 2.2. The school site comprises the original Victorian school building, with a series of later extensions completed in 2002, 2012 and 2015, together with a single storey modular building. The modular building contains two classrooms: the front section provides the school library, and the rear accommodates a small SEND group of eight pupils currently on the school roll.
- 2.3. To the west, the land levels drop steeply towards an area of scrub and semi-mature ash trees. The external area immediately adjoining the modular building is uneven and currently used for storage due to its unsuitability for play.

3. Use, Design & Amount

- 3.1. The proposal involves minor internal and external alterations to the existing modular building to provide improved accommodation for SEND pupils. The works are small scale, have no impact on pupil numbers or staffing, and do not result in any change of use.
- 3.2. The key components of the proposal are:
- > Reconfiguring part of the library to provide new toilets and a breakout room for SEND pupils.
 - > Introducing a new external door to allow direct access to an outdoor area dedicated to this group.
 - > Raising and levelling the adjacent external space through the installation of raised external play area and a soft safety surface, making the area suitable for supervised play.
 - > Increasing the height of the boundary fence along this elevation to meet safeguarding requirements.
- 3.3. Design changes are minimal. The new door will be sympathetic to the appearance of the existing modular building, and no fixed play equipment is proposed. The external play area will sit on an existing concrete slab that currently supports a shed, but as the concrete base does not extend across the full length of the proposed play area, said concrete base will need extending.
- 3.4. The works will enhance functionality without altering the footprint, scale, or massing of the modular structure. The proposal ensures that SEND pupils have safe, direct access to high quality facilities appropriate for their educational and developmental needs.

4. Planning Policy Compliance

4.1. CC7 - High Quality Design

The proposal maintains and enhances design quality through sensitive, small scale changes that respect the character of the school and surrounding residential streets. The new door and fencing match existing, and external play area uses neutral concrete pavers. There will be no adverse visual impact.

4.2. CC8 - Safeguarding Residential Amenity

The raised external play area utilises a timber fence backing to prevent any overlooking, loss of privacy, or overbearing impact. The site remains screened from nearby residential properties. The proposal has no adverse impact on neighbouring living conditions.

4.3. EN12 - Biodiversity

The school does not lie within an identified green network. The proposed works will not result in any loss of biodiversity or geodiversity. Due to the very small area involved and the functional requirement for a level play surface, further biodiversity enhancements are not practicable.

4.4. EN14 - Protection of Trees and Vegetation

Trees to the West of the site are under a TPO type (W1) and (T1). No trees will be removed as part of the proposed works. Some trees overhang the boundary adjacent to the modular building and proposed play area, and these are subject to routine maintenance. If any tree pruning is required to facilitate installation of the proposed fencing, a Tree Works Application will be submitted.

The external play area does not sit entirely on the existing concrete base, and therefore the slab will be extended. The new section of slab will use porous concrete, allowing air and water to pass between the surface and the underlying soil, helping to maintain appropriate conditions around any nearby root zones.

Above the concrete slab, the raised play surface will be formed using pedestals supporting concrete pavers with a rubber crumb finish. This method creates a continuous ventilation void beneath the pavers, ensuring that the rubber surface does not seal the slab and that the soil below can continue to breathe. All construction works near trees will comply with BS5837:2012.

4.5. OU1 - Community Facilities

The proposal directly improves facilities for existing pupils and does not increase capacity or intensify site use. The works bring an underutilised external space back into productive use through safe levelling and safeguarding measures, fully aligning with policy support for enhancing community and educational facilities.

4.6. TR3 - Highway Safety and Transport Impact

There is no change to pupil numbers, staff numbers or access arrangements. As such, the proposal will not have any material impact on the transport network, highway safety, congestion, or pick-up/drop-off patterns.

4.7. TR5 - Parking and Cycle Provision

Given that the proposal does not alter school capacity or staffing, the existing parking and cycle arrangements remain appropriate and sufficient. There is no impact on parking demand.

5. Community Involvement Statement

5.1. Due to the small and contained nature of the proposal—being limited to internal reconfiguration and minor external alterations within the school grounds—wider community engagement was not required. The works do not affect public access, do not intensify use, and do not impact neighbouring properties.

6. Material Specifications



Fencing:

1.8H x 3.0L GuardSAFE Vmesh Panel from CLA Fabrications or similar product

Approximately 15m to be used.



Rubber Crumb:

PolyBounce EPDM Rubber Crumb 1-4mm from Polybound or similar product

Applicant to discharge specific colour at a later date.

Approximately 27m² to be used.



Concrete Pavers:

Schellevis Slab Grey 400 x 400 x 50mm from Country Supplies or similar product

Approximately 170 slabs to be used.



Adjustable Pedestals:

222-392mm BALANCE EXTRA adjustable pedestal from Wallbarn or similar product

Approximately 208 to be used.



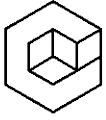
Timber Fence Backing:

Forest 1830x1520mm Pressure Treated Vertical Closeboard Fence Panel or similar product to match existing

Approximately 7m to be used.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The proposed improvements to the modular building at New Christ Church Primary School are modest, carefully designed, and functionally necessary to provide appropriate, safe, and high quality facilities for SEND pupils already on the school roll.
- 7.2. The works will have no adverse impact on the character of the school, surrounding residential area, neighbouring amenity, local biodiversity, tree cover, highway network, or parking provision.
- 7.3. The proposal complies fully with relevant planning policies, including CC7, CC8, EN12, EN14, OU1, TR3 and TR5. It represents a positive, sustainable enhancement to an important community educational facility and should therefore be supported.



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