



Design Charter for Schools

Adopted
July 2018

10

Principles for
well-designed
schools



Waltham Forest



Cllr Simon Miller
Borough Design
Champion and
Portfolio Lead Member
for Economic Growth
and High Streets

As Portfolio Lead Member for Children And Young People, I have great pleasure, on behalf of myself and the borough design champion, Cllr Miller, in introducing the borough's School Design Charter.

We are extremely proud to announce that this Charter is supported by Design Council (the Government's advisor and a leading authority in design).

Given our growing young population and our ambitious programme for new housing, we face important challenges to improve and expand existing schools.

The Council is committed to achieving excellent design quality in our schools. This is considered fundamental to making them places that children and young people can develop the skills needed for successful careers, to reach their full potential, and enjoy a good quality of life.

This charter sets out our commitment to achieving well-designed, teaching and learning environments, with both buildings and grounds at the heart of our communities they serve.

Cllr Grace Williams
Cabinet Lead Portfolio Member
For Children And Young People

Supported by:

**Design
Council**

Cover image: Frederick Bremer School (taken by Penoyre & Prasad)

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“Evidence shows a clear link between well-designed schools and pupil performance and behaviour.

Good design alone doesn’t raise standards, but bad design impacts on the quality of teaching, the aspirations and self-perception of pupils, and the sustainability of a school.”

Design Council



Willowfield School, E17 (image by HLM Architects)

Purpose of the Document

The Design Charter for Schools sets out the London Borough of Waltham Forest's ambitions for the quality of design in its schools. Schools play an important role in improving the life chances of our residents, which is why the Council is committed to ensuring they are well-designed and provide high quality teaching and learning environments that contribute positively to their local communities.

The Charter provides 10 key principles that can be applied to all schools. It offers clear guidance for developers, planning applicants, planning officers, the public and other interested parties involved in developing existing and new schools.

Where proposals are referred to the Waltham Forest Design Advice Panel, the panel members will consider how the design responds to the principles within this Charter.

Policy Context

The NPPF and London Plan support good design. This Charter relates to these documents and the following key Local Development Framework policies:

- DM 10 – Resource Efficiency and High Environmental Standards
- DM 11 – Decentralised and Renewable Energy
- DM 17 – Physical Infrastructure
- DM 23 – Health and Well Being
- DM 28 – Heritage Assets
- DM 29 – Design
- DM 30 – Inclusive Design
- DM 32 – Impacts on neighbours

Useful References

- Area guidelines for mainstream schools Bulletin 103, Department for Education/ Education Funding Agency, 2014
- Better spaces for learning #TopMarkSchools, RIBA, May 2016
- Schools for the future designing school grounds, Department for Education and Skills, 2006
- Schools for the future: exemplar designs, concepts and ideas, Department for Education and Skills, 2003

1 Right School, Right Place

Locate schools in the heart of the community they serve

Provide schools where they are needed

- Locate new schools where evidence shows additional school places are required.
- Look at the whole neighbourhood, irrespective of borough boundaries, when considering the need for a new school.
- Consider wider community needs and where appropriate take opportunities for sharing facilities, use such as sports grounds.

Access and sustainable transport

- Maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport and link into existing networks.
- Discourage private car use.
- Encourage sustainable transport through the 'School Travel Plan' and 'Travelling to School Initiative'.
- Ensure children have safe routes to school.
- Ensure cycle parking is convenient and accessible.
- Locate entrances where they are convenient for children, staff, and the local community and designed so they are accessible for all.
- Ensure entrance spaces and surrounding pavements can accommodate children at peak times.



Encourage sustainable transport.
Davies Lane Primary School, E11



This entrance is accessible for all and can accommodate children at peak times.
Frederick Bremer School, E17 (image by Penoyre & Prasad)



Scale and massing respond to context.
Queens Road School, E17

2 A School To Be Proud Of

Create a school with a strong identity that fits in the neighbourhood



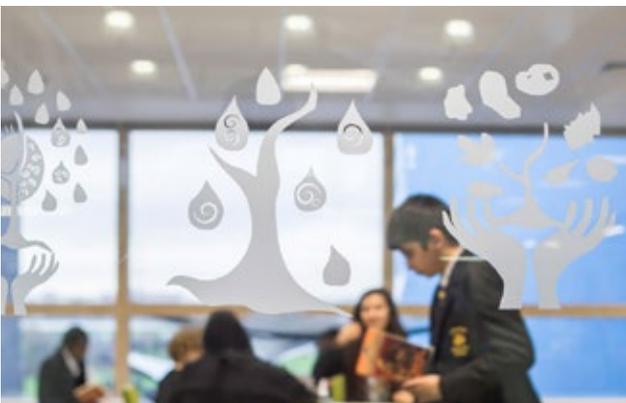
The design of the school responds to the architecture of the locality.

James Gillespie High School, Edinburgh (JM Architects, image by Andrew Lee)



This school has civic presence and presents a positive image from the street.

Walthamstow School for Girls, E17 (image by Simon Warren)



Symbols and artwork based on the schools logo are incorporated throughout the school and combine to provide a strong identity.

Willowfield School, E17 (image by HLM Architects)

Relationship with the neighbourhood

- Design school buildings and grounds that respond well to the broader locality.
- Create positive views of the school from the street.
- Ensure school entrances are welcoming to children and visitors and give a good first impression.

Civic presence

- Reinforce the public image of learning through the design of the school.
- Ensure buildings and grounds are clearly identifiable as a school.

School ethos and identity

- Reflect the school's identity and ethos. This could be achieved in the school buildings or landscape, through the sensitive incorporation of historic features, and through the use of colour, pattern, texture, graphics (such as with signage) and artwork.

3 Site Plan

Make the best use of the site

Constraints and opportunities

- Create a school that makes the best use of site characteristics such as topography.
- Consider air quality. Where possible keep play areas away from busy roads, and introduce planting (such as ivy screens) to help filter potential fumes.
- Consider aspect, orientation, daylight and views when designing new buildings and spaces.
- Consider the historic environment and make the most of heritage assets.

The site as a whole

- Ensure the best and most effective use of the site.
- Design entrances and routes that are convenient and sheltered where appropriate.
- Create a clear distinction between public and private areas.
- Create zones with distinct identities and clear boundaries that support teaching and learning.
- Zone the school to enable out of hours community use.

Operational requirements

- Consider management and maintenance from the outset.
- Create sensible and discreet arrangements for waste.
- Ensure service areas and service access do not harm the qualities of the school.
- Ensure buildings and grounds are durable and safe to maintain



Topography has been used well here to achieve two levels that can be accessed from outside. The lower level provides indoor/outdoor dining space and the upper level provides classrooms.

Walthamstow School for Girls, E17 (image by Simon Warren)



The new building works with the original school buildings to create a coherent series of play areas within the site.

Holy Family, E17 (image by Willmott Dixon)



The school is zoned to enable out of hours community use with a welcoming public entrance at Vinegar Alley.

Holy Family, E17

4 School Grounds

Make an asset of outdoor spaces



The arrangement of the buildings create a courtyard that encourages social interaction.

Frederick Bremer School, E17



Food growing projects provide an outdoor teaching opportunity.

Frederick Bremer School, E17



Outdoor area for social interaction and play.

Walthamstow School for Girls, E17 (image by Tim Soar)

Relationship between grounds and buildings

- Create purposeful outdoor areas that have a strong relationship with the buildings.

Physical activity

- Provide outdoor sports facilities that promote children's health, wellbeing and relaxation.
- Ensure areas for sport and games can be used in the winter months.
- Design sports facilities that enable community use and meet community needs.

Learning, play and social interaction

- Design outdoor areas that encourage children's imaginative and creative play.
- Design outdoor areas that support learning and encourage social interaction.
- Consider the potential of food growing or wildlife habitat projects for outdoor learning and incorporate natural play.

Biodiversity and wildlife

- Encourage a whole site approach to biodiversity and planting and consider the mental health and well-being benefits it can bring.
- Link with the natural environment outside the school.

5 Organisation

Make a place that is thoughtfully planned, and easy to understand and navigate

Accommodate the school agenda

- Demonstrate an understanding of the school's educational and social objectives and organisational principles.
- Ensure the arrangement and proximity of teaching and learning spaces supports the schools ethos and learning priorities.

Arrange spaces well

- Achieve an arrangement that allows for natural ventilation and day-lighting to the majority of areas.
- Design for cross-curricular learning.

Getting around the school

- Create a school that children, staff and visitors can easily navigate.
- Ensure entrances are well defined and obvious.
- Design circulation routes that minimise travel times between key areas.
- Plan routes thoughtfully so they are generous and accessible to all.



Careful design of skylights brings natural light into this corridor.

Kelmscott School, E17



Doors and zones are colour coded to help people find their way around.

Frederick Bremer School, E17



Spacious corridors that are bright and uplifting.

Jenny Hammond School, E11 (image by NPSL)

6 Buildings

Make form, massing and appearance work together



This extension to Walthamstow School for Girls complements the original listed buildings on site.
Walthamstow School for Girls, E17



The architecture and detailing at this entrance is simple and durable.
Willowfield school, E17 (image by HLM Architects)

Form and massing

- Ensure building shape and size is appropriate for the site.
- Ensure new buildings complement each other and any existing retained buildings.

Uplifting and inspiring

- Create high quality buildings with well considered architectural detailing.
- Reflect a strong character and identity across all building façades.
- Choose materials that positively contribute to character.

Durable and easy to maintain

- Ensure the fabric and materials of buildings are durable, safe and easy to maintain.

7 Interiors

Create excellent spaces for learning and teaching

Variety and delight

- Create, uplifting, well proportioned spaces that are quiet, calm and full of daylight.
- Design windows and doors to make the most of views through spaces and views out fostering a relationship with the surroundings.
- Use design, colour and texture to inspire, encourage and motivate students and staff.

High quality and robust interiors

- Create the right acoustic conditions particularly in teaching and learning spaces to ensure the teacher can be easily heard.
- Reduce direct sunlight and glare into teaching rooms.
- Ensure all teaching spaces have daylight and views out.
- Ensure materials and finishes are robust, durable and easy to maintain.

Ensure buildings work well when in full use

- Create a variety of areas to meet the needs of different ages and group sizes.
- Understand that communal spaces such as dining areas have a social as well as a functional role.
- Provide adequate storage and display areas so circulation areas can be kept free of hazards.
- Consider acoustics, ensuring noisier zones are separated effectively from quieter areas.



Large areas of glazing make this central space bright and uplifting.

Frederick Bremer School, E17 (image by HLM Architects)



Windows and doors to this classroom create a visual connection with the outside.

Holy Family School, E17

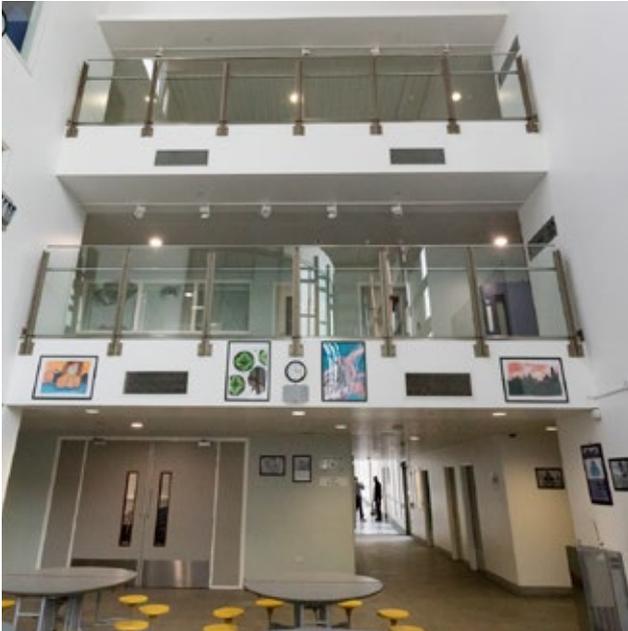


Acoustic ceiling panels help reduce noise to quieter areas of the school.

Hillyfield Primary Academy, E17 (image by Hayhurst & Co)

8 Feeling Safe

Create a secure and welcoming place



Glazed balconies encourage natural surveillance.
Frederick Bremer School, E17



This window allows children and staff to overlook the play ground.
Heathcote School, E4



Anti-bullying toilets that are secure and easy to monitor.
Frederick Bremer School, E17

Safe access

- Ensure entrances and exits are inclusive, appropriately located, easy to find, and support safe travel.
- Ensure entrances and exits are safe and can be controlled by staff.
- Ensure entrances are well-lit with passive overlooking.
- Ensure boundary fencing brings safety but does not feel hostile or create a fortress effect.

Create safe and secure internal spaces

- Create a clear separation of public and private areas within the school.
- Encourage opportunities for passive observation throughout the school. For example positioning staff workrooms and offices in key locations on circulation routes.
- Avoid dead-end corridors.
- Ensure toilets can be easily reached and supervised.
- Locate lockers where they can be easily supervised.

9 Long Life, Loose Fit

Create a school that can adapt and evolve in the future

Design for a variety of uses

- Provide a variety of spaces for different sized groups that work for a number of teaching and learning styles.
- Provide spaces that can accommodate differing layouts to support teaching and learning.

Ensure spaces and infrastructure can be easily adapted to meet future school needs

- Create a school that can adapt to the changing needs of the school and community. This should apply to both internal and external spaces.
- Ensure furniture and equipment can be adapted to a range of layouts with adequate storage when not in use.
- Where possible, ensure designs allow for future expansion.



A moveable wall allows this area to be adapted.
Willowfield School, E17



This classroom is a flexible space that allows for different teaching layouts.
Leytonstone School, E11



The generous width of this corridor enables teaching in small groups outside the classroom.
Kelmscott School, E17

10 Environmental Resources

Promote sustainable construction and use



Careful design brings natural light into the core of the school minimising use of artificial lighting.

Hillyfield Primary Academy, E17 (image by Jonathan Nicholls)



Rainwater harvesting.

Holy Family School, E17



Harvested rainwater is used in growing areas.

Walthamstow School for Girls, E17



Solar panels on the roof.

Leytonstone School, E11

Create sustainable schools at the heart of their community which are energy efficient with reduced carbon emissions to help tackle and adapt to climate change.

Orientation, ventilation and day-lighting

- Consider the best orientation.
- Provide comfortable and well-ventilated working and learning environments all year round.
- Ensure building forms allow daylight into the depth of school buildings.
- Minimise overshadowing of key outdoor areas.

Energy usage and carbon emissions

- Ensure the design, construction and operation of the school building minimises energy, waste and water usage.
- Ensure systems are efficient and easy to manage.
- Design construction methods that are sustainable and appropriate for the physical constraints of the site.
- Provide facilities for recycling and composting.

Climate change

- Encourage rainwater harvesting and use.
- Incorporate SUDS (sustainable urban drainage systems) into the landscape where possible.

Checklist

1 RIGHT SCHOOL, RIGHT PLACE

- *Is there evidence that a new school is needed in the locality?*
- *Can the school be conveniently accessed by the local community?*
- *Are entrances in the right place?*
- *Can the school be easily accessed on foot, by bike, and by public transport?*
- *Do designs discourage private car use?*
- *Will routes to the school be safe?*
- *Can pavements accommodate children at peak times?*

2 A SCHOOL TO BE PROUD OF

- *Does the school give a good first impression?*
- *Does its design respond well to the locality?*
- *Does the design ensure it is clearly recognisable as a school?*
- *Does the design reflect the school's ethos and identity?*

3 SITE PLAN

- *Does the design make the best use of site characteristics such as topography or aspect?*
- *Has the historic environment been considered and have any heritage assets been identified?*
- *Have designated heritage assets been conserved and enhanced?*
- *Is there an issue with air quality at the school and if so do designs take account of it?*
- *Is the design coherent?*
- *Has the school been appropriately zoned for teaching and learning, and to allow out of hours community use?*
- *Have management and maintenance been considered?*
- *Have service areas been designed so they do not harm the qualities of the school?*

4 SCHOOL GROUNDS

- *Do the outdoor areas have a strong relationship with the buildings?*
- *Have areas for physical education been provided?*
- *Do outdoor areas enable imaginative play, support learning, and encourage social interaction?*
- *Has consideration been given to biodiversity and wildlife?*

5 ORGANISATION

- *Does the design accommodate the school's agenda?*
- *Does the design allow for natural day-lighting and ventilation?*
- *Is the school easy to navigate?*
- *Are entrances well defined and obvious?*
- *Do routes promote short travel times between key areas?*
- *Are routes generous and accessible to all?*

Checklist continued

6 BUILDINGS

- *Do new buildings compliment each other and existing buildings?*
- *Do new buildings respond to the historic significance of existing buildings or features with the grounds?*
- *Are buildings of high quality with good architectural detailing?*
- *Do materials positively contribute to character?*
- *Are materials durable and easy to maintain?*

7 INTERIORS

- *Are interiors well-proportioned, uplifting and full of daylight?*
- *Do windows and doors optimise views?*
- *Have acoustics been considered?*
- *Will spaces be well-ventilated?*
- *Do designs reduce direct sunlight and glare into teaching rooms?*
- *Will buildings work well when in full use?*

8 FEELING SAFE

- *Has the Metropolitan Police Design Out Crime Officer been consulted?*
- *Does the design create safe teaching and working environments for both staff and pupils?*
- *Are entrances well-lit and overlooked?*
- *Can entrances and exits be controlled?*
- *Is the publicly accessible reception area secure?*
- *Are boundaries secure but do not create a fortress effect?*
- *Is there a clear separation between public and private areas?*
- *Does the design encourage passive surveillance throughout the school?*
- *Have dead-ended corridors been avoided?*

9 LONG LIFE, LOOSE FIT

- *Does the design create a variety of spaces?*
- *Can the school and its grounds easily adapt to meet future needs and the needs of the community?*

10 ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

- *Does the proposal help to tackle climate change?*
- *Does the design and construction promote water and energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions?*
- *Has orientation been considered?*
- *Will daylight reach the depth of interior spaces?*
- *Has overshadowing of key exterior spaces been minimised?*
- *Are there facilities for recycling?*

