

The Suitability Core Fact

Building better schools:
Investing in Scotland's future

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Contents

1 Introduction	02	4 Reporting	14
Use of this document	03	Frequency	15
Timing of condition core fact reports	03	Review and update of Suitability data	15
Timescales for implementation	03	Data reported	15
What is Suitability?	03	Consistency in reporting	15
Why assess Suitability?	04	Interface with other local authority processes and tools	15
What are the benefits?	05	Staff awareness raising	15
Who is this for?	05		
2 Scope of Suitability Core Fact Reporting	06	5 Key Points	16
What are we assessing?	07	Glossary	17
What are we assessing against?	07	Appendix	19
School types	07	Assessment worksheets	19
Shared facilities	07	Method	19
Staff houses and residential accommodation for pupils	08		
Suitability versus Condition	08		
Accessibility	09		
Temporary/permanent alterations	09		
Sufficiency (capacity)	09		
Management	09		
3 Methodology	10		
Areas	11		
Factors	11		
Weightings	12		
ASN accommodation	12		
Recording	12		
Documented process	13		
Comments box	13		

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

01 Introduction

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

The following guidance has been prepared for reporting on the suitability of the School Estate. This Core Fact on suitability is part of a suite of Core Facts¹ for data which is collected annually as part of the performance management regime for the School Estate Strategy².

This refreshed guidance has been produced as the result of a collaborative venture between the Scottish Government, Scottish Futures Trust, Scottish Heads of Property Services (local authorities), Education Scotland, Scottish Building Standards, Architecture and Design Scotland and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland.

It seeks to further improve the consistency and robustness of the reporting of the Suitability Core Fact and therefore increase confidence in the comparability of the ratings within and among local authorities across Scotland. It also aims to strengthen the links between the school estate and its suitability for delivering Curriculum for Excellence³.

Use of this document

This document should be read in conjunction with *Core Facts – Building Our Future: Scotland's School Estate*, issued in November 2017. It sets out the framework within which information should be reported to the Scottish Government. While offering recommendations on assessment methodology, it is not intended to restrict or constrain the exercise of good practice in the school estate asset management function within local authorities.

Note the term 'school' is used as a general term throughout the guidance to cover the many differing models of the 'learning environment' such as 'through-schools', 'community campuses', etc. which invite wider ideas of learning. It also means, in practical terms, the buildings and the grounds contained within the site.

The guidance has been structured in a way to ensure it is sufficiently flexible to address the latest national priorities as they emerge, develop and

become embedded as part of the curriculum e.g. Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), etc.

Timing of condition core fact reports

The Core Facts on each school are reported by local authorities to the Scottish Government annually, based on the situation at 1st April each year, for validation and publication later in the year. There is an expectation that local authorities will maintain their suitability assessments up to date in a manner which best fits their own annual reporting cycle.

Timescales for implementation

It is expected that authorities will implement the guidance immediately as most, if not all, already hold the data required and the requirements are based on long-standing recognised best practice much of which is already set out in the 2008 guidance.

What is Suitability?

Suitability is a measure of whether a school is fit for the purpose of delivering the education curriculum.

That is whether its design and layout enhance its function and use, whether there is space and scope to accommodate all the pre-school, day-school and after-school demands and services, whether it is 'inclusive' and accessible to those with disabilities, how capable it is of adjustment or adaptation, how able to 'flex' in response to future, sometimes unforeseen changes in the scale and nature of demand and usage, to changes in climate and to changes in ICT and other technology and the ways in which education may be delivered.

1 Core Facts Overview guidance document 2017

2 <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2009/09/22154600/0>

3 <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum>

Why assess Suitability?

Since the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), there has been an ever-increasing interest in and understanding of the contribution that place and space make to a successful learning environment. Designed as a curriculum for the 21st century, CfE encourages active learning approaches which engage and motivate learners, and which allow them to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Schools have responded to this ambition by using their existing buildings and grounds in new and imaginative ways. For example, by working with learners and members of the wider community to plan a wilderness garden to ensure learners engage in outdoor learning and receive their entitlement to learning for sustainability. Not only does this afford learners exciting ways to learn about biodiversity and eco-systems but in the process of designing and building the garden, young people will develop employability skills such as project management, leadership, budgeting, communication and problem solving.

In similar ways, schools are increasingly using their grounds and outdoor spaces to inspire or nurture learners; to grow their own food as an integral part of a healthy eating project; or to learn about the impact of climate change on local species.

Internal spaces are also finding new leases of life as schools explore how best to rise to the new policy drivers including: Getting it Right for Every Child, national STEM strategy, Scottish Attainment Challenge and the National Improvement Framework. The national focus on closing the attainment gap and raising attainment, for example, means that practitioners and schools are increasingly looking for flexible and adaptable spaces which can be used to engage and inspire learners in different ways. Other schools have adapted internal spaces to create STEM labs or hubs whilst others have repurposed areas to create community cafes which allow young people with additional support needs to learn in an inclusive way and to develop essential skills for their life and future careers.

In the ten years since this Suitability Guidance was first published, digital technologies have transformed approaches to learning and teaching with progress now being driven through the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy. The internet is no longer something young people access for one hour a week in the school ICT suite. Learners now need to be fully connected and to have access to digital infrastructure which enables them to design and build new mobile apps or online games and to develop skills in cybersecurity.

Therefore, the spaces where our children and young people learn have never been so important.

Learners and teachers alike are thriving, and education is being delivered in school buildings of an increasingly high standard. As we strive for continuous improvement it is essential that we retain and update, and indeed continue to improve, our Core Facts data in order that the progress which has been made can be measured, and also to ensure there is a clear evidence-based picture of what remains to be done.

Assessing the suitability of school buildings and grounds has established benchmarking measures and allowed authorities to identify and prioritise need, related to user expectations and aspirations.

In recent years there has also been an increasing focus on the development of community campuses and modern designs for learning. The following guidance therefore must be sufficiently flexible to assess the wide range of traditional and modern designs which are used to deliver the curriculum while in many cases also providing facilities for the community.

What are the benefits?

The Core Facts collectively inform the local authorities school estates management plan and are used at both local and national level to:

- provide consistent data,
- assess performance and allow improvements to be focused on areas of greatest need,
- enable the provision of safe buildings,
- assess buildings on their suitability for supporting learning to deliver *Curriculum for Excellence*,
- inform spending and investment decisions,
- encourage best practice, and
- measure progress in delivering the vision and aspirations of the school estate strategy.

Who is this for?

Essentially it is for the benefit of all school users. The design and layout of the school, and the way the buildings work in combination with the grounds, should be suitable to meet the needs of all users, promoting well-being and making a positive contribution to the activities in which they engage. A school should act as a learning and teaching resource, enhancing opportunities for learners and supporting their growth and development.

It is also considered good practice to involve school users in the creation, use and assessment of the Core Facts and how the information can be linked to the local curriculum and the development of the learning spaces within the school as part of context-based learning.

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

02 Scope of Suitability Core Fact Reporting

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHT

What are we assessing?

The assessment is of the school and its fitness for purpose when delivering the learning and teaching, leisure and social activities and the health and well-being of all users as part of Curriculum for Excellence. Within this there is a need to consider the different types of spaces within the school and the different activities for which they are used. Account should also be taken of the differing ideas on learner journeys e.g. re-thinking senior phases in high school and greater linkages to further or higher education; or blended early learning and primary stages.

In many instances schools are civic buildings with a wider community presence and a valuable community resource offering a range of public services. This is fully acknowledged; however, this Core Fact guidance focuses solely on the educational element.

Account should be taken of the dynamic nature of the education service, of important national and local policies and initiatives, and of each school's ability to accommodate and promote these within the school.

What are we assessing against?

There is no one right design for a school. School designs, like the designs of other buildings reflect aspects of what was considered appropriate at the time of construction, and will vary according to the available site, space, expected pupil roll and sector (primary, secondary or ASN). It is therefore not about assessing a school against the perfect school, nor ranking it against neighbouring schools, but rather considering it in the context of the paragraphs above and then reflecting how well it serves its purpose in terms of the agreed criteria (see section 3).

School types

The suitability of schools in all three integrated sectors (primary, secondary and additional support needs (ASN)) should be assessed. Suitability assessments should include school facilities that are temporary or permanent and regardless of the procurement method, ownership or facilities management status.

Where early learning and childcare settings are on the same site as a primary, secondary or ASN these should be included and treated as part of the school.

Shared facilities

When assessing suitability, all parts of the school used for the delivery of school education should be considered, whether or not they are also used for other purposes, such as community use, shared with another school, where the school hosts a learning partnership, etc.

Where school facilities are used for alternative purposes by local authorities, these other uses should not be taken into account in the assessment of suitability for the school, except in circumstances in which the dual use places restrictions on time-tabling for school use during the school day. For example, school sports and leisure facilities to which the school has unrestricted access during the school day, but which are available to the community out with school hours should be assessed in the same way as if they were solely for school use.

Staff houses and residential accommodation for pupils

Staff houses and accommodation for pupils should be excluded from the suitability rating reported to the Scottish Government. Although this is excluded from the scope, authorities still are encouraged to adopt this practice for the management of the properties.

Suitability versus Condition

A clear distinction between the definitions of suitability and condition has been drawn within *The Condition Core Fact* guidance document and is quoted here for ease of reference:

One potential source of confusion when assessing the condition rating for a school is the distinction between condition and suitability. In reporting the condition and suitability Core Facts, the following distinction in scope should be drawn between the two:

- *Compliance with the design intent should be addressed under condition. Hence, condition deals with the state of repair of features or facilities that exist as part of the school fabric (and as part of its current design).*
- *Where the current design or design intent has been rendered inadequate or inappropriate by new requirements that maybe applied retrospectively, then this should be dealt with under condition. These requirements could arise as a consequence of regulatory or central government guidance. This aspect of condition should include the general health and safety requirement to reduce the risk to pupils, staff and the general public to a level which is as low as reasonably practicable.*
- *Discrimination requirements under the Equality Act and inclusion measures should be dealt with under suitability.*

- *Where it is considered that the design or design intent was already inadequate or inappropriate when viewed against legislation, regulations or regulatory or central government guidance existing and applicable at the time of installation, then this should be dealt with under condition. For example, the adequate provision of sanitary accommodation for pupils in accordance with the School Premises (General Requirements and Standards) (Scotland) Regulations (see transition elements).*
- *Matters of security of the school fabric, contents and occupants should be addressed under condition.*

*Aside from the above considerations, the adequacy of design or design intent, including the absence of any particular feature or facility, should be addressed under suitability. It should be noted that the way in which the buildings and facilities are used or operated (or indeed misused or mis-operated) is not part of condition. If a design regarded as unsuitable necessitates the use of the school facilities in a way that is out-with the design intent, then this is a matter for consideration under suitability e.g. the use of a practical teaching space as a general classroom. (Extract from: *The Condition Core Fact*. Scottish Government. November 2017.)*

In order that a school's suitability rating does not include any issues which should be considered under condition, the school facilities should be assessed as though they were in good condition. For example; a leaking roof, however inconvenient, should not affect the suitability rating of the school but should instead be a matter to be considered in the context of the condition rating.

Accessibility

Please note that accessibility requirements under the Equality Act should be dealt with here under suitability.

The emphasis for accessibility is on an inclusion agenda that provides effective learning and teaching for *all* learners. The importance of a learning environment that is welcoming and accessible to learners with disabilities or additional support needs is a critical aspect of this. Legislation⁴ already requires authorities not only to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage, but also to prepare 'accessibility strategies' for all schools to improve access to education for pupils with disabilities – access both to the physical environment and to the full curriculum, in particular supported by ICT facilities and developments.

Temporary/permanent alterations

The suitability assessment should consider the spaces of the school and the use for which they were designed, either at the initial building stage or by approved alteration thereafter. For example, a GP room converted to provide general teaching accommodation will now be considered as a classroom. Similarly, a classroom converted to a music technology room or a nurture room will now be considered in its new form.

Temporary repairs in place at the time of the assessment, for example a damaged window boarded over pending replacement, should not affect the suitability rating. However, permanent repairs or alterations, for example, the installation of window grilles which prevent windows opening properly or exclude a significant amount of natural light, should be taken into account when considering those aspects of the suitability assessment.

Sufficiency (capacity)

In a change from the previous guidance, a school should be considered for suitability based on the pupil roll currently in place.

Moreover, if there is a significant change in the pupil roll this would trigger a review of the suitability of the school.

Management

The suitability assessment, in this context, does not include the way the school is managed, its image, ethos and reputation or issues such as cleanliness.

This guidance does not preclude an authority from assessing the way in which their school buildings and grounds are managed. They may choose to do so as part of the initial assessment process, but any data should not then be included in the overall suitability rating.

⁴ Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 – www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2002/asp_20020012_en_1

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

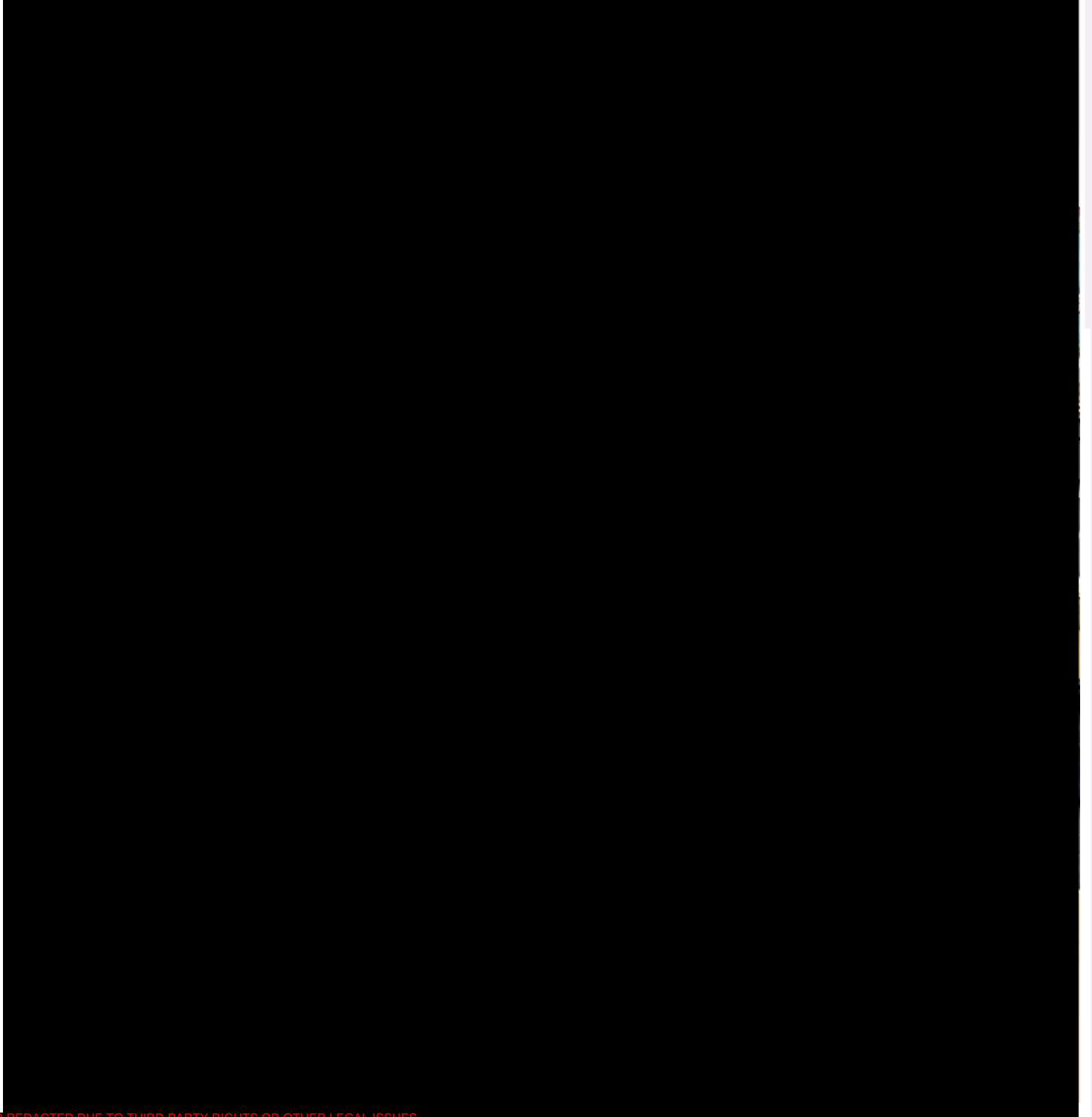


PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

03 Methodology

The methodology for suitability requires to be sufficiently robust to produce consistency in approach when determining ratings in and across authorities. It also has been designed to be as user friendly as possible with the intention of allowing all involved to benefit from the process and to be encouraged to think about those things about a school and its grounds which make it suitable for education and enhance learning and teaching.

It is generally accepted that those best placed to assess the suitability of a building are the users, and therefore for a school these are the school management team(s) and faculty heads, along with the education core team from the authority. They are best placed to bring that assessment together, taking account as appropriate, of the views of others, principally staff and pupils.

For that reason, for each of the 'areas' to be assessed, illustrative exemplars for the 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' ratings have been provided in the style of the Education Scotland '*How Good is Our School*' self-evaluation model, with which the school management team will already be familiar. In each of the illustrative exemplars, four alternative statements are provided for each of the 'factors' and the most appropriate is selected for each of the areas being assessed.

Areas

In order to capture all of the information necessary to arrive at a suitability rating for the school as a whole, six 'areas' have been identified, five of which are common to all schools namely:

- Learning and Teaching Spaces (General)
- Internal Social Spaces
- Internal Facilities
- External Social Spaces
- External Facilities

and for secondary schools or schools with a secondary department there is a sixth area which is 'Learning and Teaching Spaces (Practical)' in order to cover dedicated specialist practical accommodation.

Many learning spaces are used for a variety of purposes and where this happens it is correct to assess them more than once. This could result in the same space being assessed differently, depending on usage. For example, a space might achieve an 'A' rating as a dining hall but a 'C' rating as an assembly hall or PE hall.

Each of these 'areas' is then rated:

A: Good – Performing well and operating effectively (the school buildings and grounds support the delivery of services to children and communities);

B: Satisfactory – Performing well but with minor problems (the school buildings and grounds generally support the delivery of services to children and communities);

C: Poor – Showing major problems and/or not operating optimally (the school buildings and grounds impede the delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school);

D: Bad – Does not support the delivery of services to children and communities (the school buildings and grounds seriously impede the delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school).

Factors

To ensure that the ratings are consistent and comparable, they should be assessed against five key 'factors', which have equal weighting. These are:

Functionality e.g. shape, size, adaptability, lighting,

Accessibility e.g. ease of access for all users,

Environmental Conditions e.g. temperature, acoustics, ventilation, natural light, controllability,

Safety and Security e.g. heat sources, windows, fire doors,

Fixed Furniture and Fittings e.g. ICT infrastructure, storage, display boards, power points.

The examples in the above list are illustrative rather than exhaustive or exclusive.

Weightings

Each of the 'areas' has been allocated a 'weighting' in order that the overall calculation for the school should reflect the relative importance of each of the 'areas'. The workbook which calculates the overall category for the school uses both 'major' and 'intermediate' weightings. The major weightings are shown below and the areas to which the 'intermediate' weightings are applied can be seen in the appendix. In all schools, the 'weighting' for learning and teaching areas is 50%.

Therefore, in primary schools or primary departments the major weightings are:

Learning and Teaching Spaces	50%
Internal Social Spaces	15%
Internal Facilities	15%
External Social Spaces	10%
External Facilities	10%

In secondary schools or secondary departments, the major weightings are:

Learning and Teaching Spaces (General)	25%
Learning and Teaching Spaces (Practical)	25%
Internal Social Spaces	15%
Internal Facilities	15%
External Social Spaces	10%
External Facilities	10%

ASN accommodation

ASN schools or dedicated accommodation within a larger school should be assessed in the same way as primary and secondary schools using whichever workbooks are the most appropriate. In addition, there is provision in the workbook to assess specialist ASN/SFL facilities. The assessments will take account of the range of environments and more specialist facilities and equipment required to suit the diverse needs of the pupils. Depending on the pupils, this might include dispersed dining, smaller breakout spaces, areas where children with ASD/sensory issues can avoid overstimulation, or safe and nurturing areas where children with SEBN might feel supported. Vehicular access and external circulation for ASN pupils are also important and should be considered under 'external facilities'.

Recording

The ratings for each 'intermediate-area' should be recorded using the suitability assessment worksheets, which have been provided to each local authority. There are separate worksheets for assessing primary and secondary schools or departments. Collectively this establishes an assessment score of major areas and ultimately overall assessment of the facility.

Two versions of assessments have been developed. One is a text document or worksheet for printing off for use when carrying out the actual assessments for each 'intermediate-area' – simplified versions of these are appended to this document for illustration. The second is an Excel spreadsheet or workbook for entering and collating the data. This has been devised in such a way that all the calculations will be carried out automatically upon completion of all the relevant sections. In both versions, a covering page provides some guidance as to how the assessment should be carried out. Details on how to use the workbook are supplied separately with the workbook when it is issued.

Further electronic copies of the worksheets are available from the Scottish Government's school estate website. Whilst it is not anticipated that the underlying methodology or weightings used in these will change, it is possible that the accompanying guidance sheet or examples provided could be updated to further improve usability in light of feedback from authorities.

While all the information contained in the workbooks will be of interest to local authorities in terms of school estate management planning; only the overall suitability rating for each school will be reported to the Scottish Government.

Documented process

Local authorities should have a stated system setting out their process for assigning suitability categories to schools which adopts this guidance. In addition, an evidence-based auditable record of that process and its results should be maintained. As a minimum, this should reference the process used and document the sources of input data, the names and roles of the participants, the date when the suitability assessment was completed, and the suitability categories assigned to each factor and space within the workbook. The record should also note any amendments made to the overall school suitability rating arrived at by the standard process.

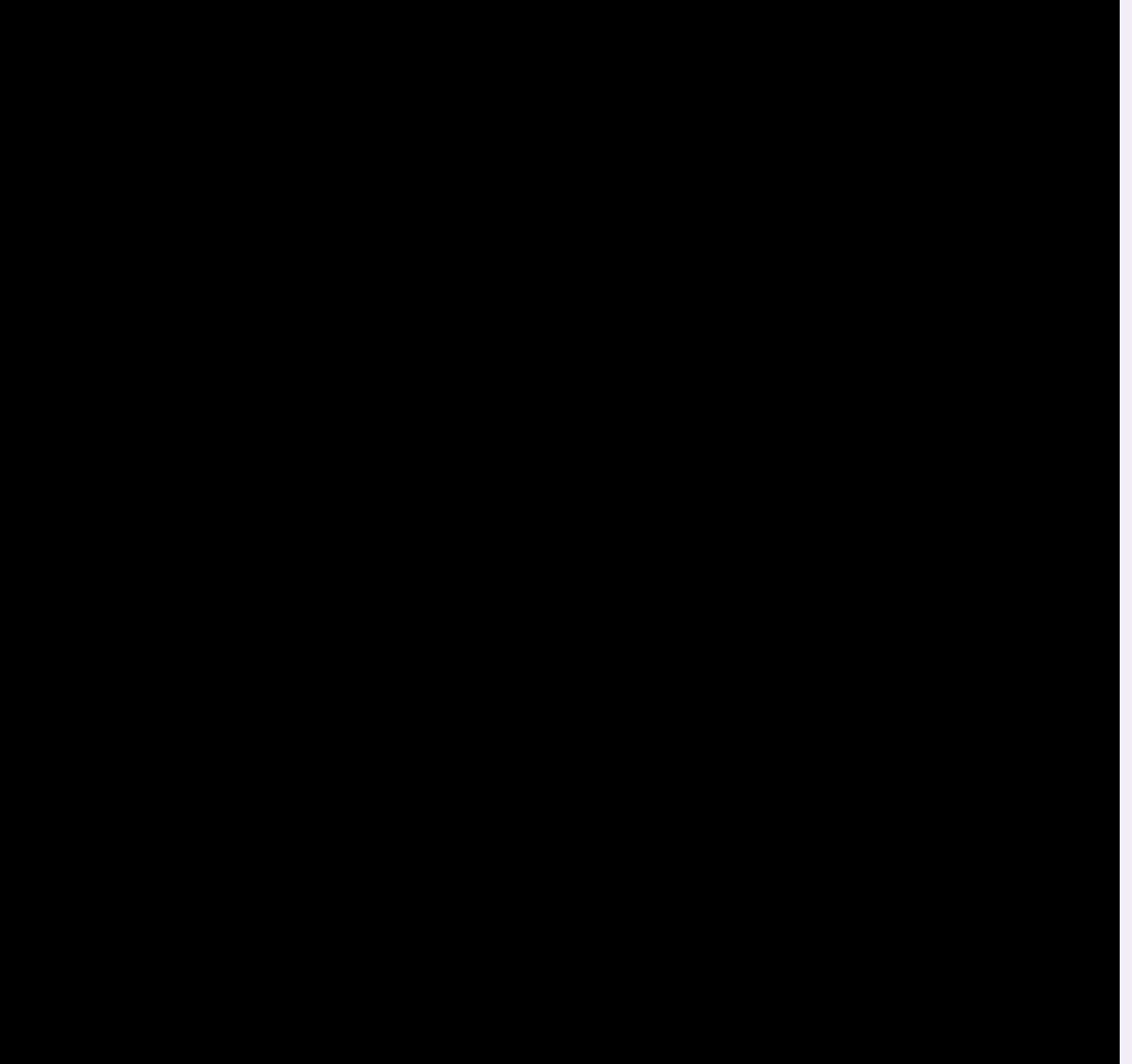
Comments box

For local authorities' own purposes, a Comments Box is provided on each worksheet in order that the person/s undertaking the assessment can flag up any issue of particular merit or concern. It is good practice to prepare comments when areas are rated either 'C' or 'D' to allow these to be identified and considered and also to better inform, or understand, the suitability performance of a facility. Moreover, it is also good practice to identify what is working well to consider if the success can be replicated elsewhere.

04 Reporting

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Local authorities will maintain the Core Fact data principally for their own purposes, and will undertake assessments on these to a timescale which is appropriate to their individual needs. Many authorities now carry this out as a rolling programme to best maintain the data and spread the resource requirements over time.

Frequency

Suitability surveys are to be carried out, as a minimum, every 5 years.

Review and update of Suitability data

The surveys shall also be reviewed annually and if there have been no material changes made to the property or to the service demands on the property they shall remain unchanged.

However, if any of the following triggers occur then a new full survey will be undertaken:

- building works affecting areas across the school,
- if there is a significant change in the pupil roll, or
- if the local authority considers it appropriate.

Data reported

The data reported annually to Scottish Government is the 'A' to 'D' suitability rating for each school and the date when the latest full suitability survey was undertaken, as set out in the workbook.

Consistency in reporting

The assessment of suitability, by its very nature, is a subjective exercise and one of the greatest challenges in this Core Fact for the local authority is achieving consistency in the results at school and authority levels.

To ensure consistency of reporting, a number of authorities have found it helpful to:

- use members of the education core team with the authority to work with school management teams across a number of schools to assist in providing a consistent approach to assessment,
- use one appropriately experienced member of staff to check and validate all returns, and
- to challenge 'why' where results have changed.

While it is recognised that the users' input to suitability assessment is important, it is the responsibility of local authorities to ensure that ratings assigned are accurate and robust prior to reporting them either in the local context or to the Scottish Government.

A 'moderation' exercise is therefore an important part of the process in which authorities would engage in an overall view of the returns, perhaps comparing new ratings with those previously held and reviewing any 'surprising' results. If the recommended methodology is followed, with the assessment being supported by the education core team from the authority, then there should already be a greater consistency in the results and therefore less call for moderation.

Of particular interest are the ratings for new or refurbished schools and any differing ratings for similarly designed and similarly operating schools, as these allow comparisons to be made.

Interface with other local authority processes and tools

The suitability core facts assessments should not be influenced by the results of any other options or investment appraisals.

The valuable detailed data collected from the suitability core facts should be used by the authority through the school estate management and planning to drive a range of benefits (see Overview 'purpose' for details).

Staff awareness raising

While the methodology and worksheets have been designed to be user friendly, local authorities will find it helpful to brief management teams, and those undertaking assessments, prior to the first round of ratings with the refreshed guidance.

05 Key Points

This section is provided to summarise, for ease of reference, the main points in this document along with changes from the previous version.

1. **Aims** – the refreshed guidance aims to further improve the consistency and robustness of the reporting of the suitability core fact. It also aims to strengthen the links between the school estate and its suitability for delivering Curriculum for Excellence.
2. **Suitability** – a measure of whether a school is fit for the purpose of delivering the education curriculum.
3. **Reporting** – suitability core fact information should be maintained up to date by local authorities in a manner that suits their reporting cycle. It will be collected by the Scottish Government annually, based on the situation at 1st April each year.
4. **Scope** – the suitability of schools in all three integrated sectors (primary, secondary and ASN) are assessed.
5. **Accessibility** – accessibility requirements under the Equality Act are dealt with here under suitability.
6. **Sufficiency** – schools are now assessed for their suitability based on the current pupil roll.
7. **Assessors** – those best placed to assess the suitability of the school are the school management team(s) and faculty heads, along with the education core team from the authority.
8. **Methodology** – the methodology is similar to previous and to promote greater consistency the illustrative exemplars for the ‘A’ to ‘D’ rankings are now provided along with an expansion of the ‘spaces’.
9. **Weightings** – major ‘areas’ have been subdivided into intermediate ‘areas’ to aid completion of assessment and bring a consistency of approach to assessing overall suitability of the schools.
10. **Comments** – request for feedback, for a local authority’s own purposes, on what is working well to consider if the success can be replicated, along with identifying what is influencing ‘C’ and ‘D’ ratings.
11. **Frequency** – suitability surveys are to be carried out, as a minimum, every 5 years or when specific triggers occur and reviewed annually.
12. **Consistency** – additional measures have been introduced throughout the process to improve consistency in the results.
13. **Assessment worksheets** – the original 6 ‘areas’ remain and have been revised to assist the assessor when preparing the ratings for the various types of accommodation by providing optional area types and grading examples to obtain greater compatibility of the data.
14. **Workbook** – Excel spreadsheets for entering and collating the data have been simplified and consolidated.
15. **Documented process** – good practice dictates that the process for assessing the overall suitability of the school as reported to the Scottish Government should be documented, and that suitable records of the process should be kept. These should provide an auditable trail, and facilitate continuous improvement and benchmarking.

Glossary

The glossary has been prepared to clarify and explain the meanings of the following terms:

Accommodation generally – the School should support a wide range of learning and teaching activities, didactic, independent group, individual, meeting places, safe spaces, etc. both internally and external.

Acronyms:

ASN	additional support needs
DYW	developing the young workforce
GP	general purpose
ICT	information and communications technology
PE	physical education
RMPS	religious, moral and philosophical studies
SFL	support for learning
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics

External learning areas – this is the use of the grounds of the school as another learning environment i.e. external open-air classrooms, environmental gardens etc. See the wide range of publications on outdoor learning to understand the potential and for further information.

Learning spaces (practical) – one of the national priorities is to build capacity of secondary schools in relation to science, STEM, and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) activities. Scottish Government are encouraging pupils to engage in practical activities and the national STEM strategy provides further guidance on this. Primary schools also require practical spaces which are versatile and useable for many purposes in order to carry out practical investigations and experiments in science and technology and to develop skills. These practical spaces are not necessarily rooms, just flexible spaces that are fit for purpose.

School Estate – this is used as the collective term to encompass all school sites across Scotland.

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Assessment worksheets

The worksheets for each of the six areas are appended for illustration – two are specific to secondary schools, one for primary schools and four are common to all schools. Electronic versions of these are available from the Scottish Government's school estate website – www.scotland.gov.uk/schoolestate/suitability, or call 0131 244 0373.

Method

When completing the worksheets, assess the fitness for purpose of the area by assigning a rating from A to D to each factor. The ratings will be aggregated automatically by the electronic spreadsheet to give an overall suitability assessment for the area.

Suitability Assessment – Primary

Category		Learning & Teaching Spaces Weighting: 50%	ASN/SFL	Classrooms/teaching areas	Practical/collaborative learning space	Other external learning areas	PE/games areas – internal	PE/games areas – external
Functionality	A	The shape, size and flexibility of the space fully support learning and teaching.						
	B	The shape, size and flexibility of the space generally support learning and teaching.						
	C	The shape, size and flexibility of the space impede the delivery of learning and teaching.						
	D	The shape, size and flexibility of the space seriously impede the delivery of learning and teaching.						
Accessibility	A	The learning spaces across the school are accessible to all and fully support inclusion.						
	B	The learning spaces across the school are accessible to all and generally support inclusion.						
	C	The learning spaces across the school are only partly accessible and are seen to impede inclusion.						
	D	The learning spaces across the school have limited accessibility and are seen to seriously impede inclusion.						
Environmental Conditions	A	The environmental conditions within the learning spaces fully support learning and teaching.						
	B	The environmental conditions within the learning spaces generally support learning and teaching.						
	C	The environmental conditions within the learning spaces impede learning and teaching.						
	D	The environmental conditions within the learning spaces seriously impede learning and teaching.						
Safety & Security	A	Learning and teaching spaces are safe and secure and do not impact on learning and teaching						
	B	Learning and teaching spaces are generally safe and secure with minor problems which generally do not impact upon learning and teaching						
	C	Learning and teaching spaces have safety and security issues which impede learning and teaching						
	D	Learning and teaching spaces have safety and security issues which seriously impede learning and teaching						

		Category					ASN/SFL	Classrooms/teaching areas	Practical/collaborative learning space	Other external learning areas	PE/games areas - internal	PE/games areas - external
Fixed Furniture & Fittings		Learning & Teaching Spaces Weighting: 50%										
	A	We have an extensive range of appropriate resources to allow a wide variety of teaching and learning to take place.										
	B	We have a range of appropriate resources to allow a wide variety of teaching and learning to take place.										
	C	We have a limited range of appropriate resources to allow a wide variety of teaching and learning to take place.										
D	We lack the appropriate resources to allow a wide variety of teaching and learning to take place.											

Comments

Please comment on any issues of particular concern, including any aspects rated as 'C' or 'D', to highlight good practice and to inform the suitability performance.

		Category	General Learning & Teaching Spaces Weighting: 25%										Non-practical classrooms											Collaborative learning space	Private study
			ASN/SFL	Business Studies	Computers/ICT	English	Geography	Guidance	History	Maths	Modern Languages	Modern Studies	RMPS												
Safety & Security	A	Learning and teaching spaces are safe and secure and do not impact on learning and teaching																							
	B	Learning and teaching spaces are generally safe and secure with minor problems which generally do not impact upon learning and teaching																							
	C	Learning and teaching spaces have safety and security issues which impede learning and teaching																							
	D	Learning and teaching spaces have safety and security issues which seriously impede learning and teaching																							
Fixed Furniture & Fittings	A	We have an extensive range of appropriate resources to allow a wide variety of teaching and learning to take place.																							
	B	We have a range of appropriate resources to allow a wide variety of teaching and learning to take place.																							
	C	We have a limited range of appropriate resources to allow a wide variety of teaching and learning to take place.																							
	D	We lack the appropriate resources to allow a wide variety of teaching and learning to take place.																							

Comments

Please comment on any issues of particular concern, including any aspects rated as 'C' or 'D', to highlight good practice and to inform the suitability performance.

		Category	Science	Technical	Art	Drama	Hospitality	Music/practice rooms	Other external learning areas	PE/games area – internal	PE/games area – external
		Practical Learning & Teaching Spaces Weighting: 25%									
Fixed Furniture & Fittings	A	We have an extensive range of appropriate resources to allow a wide variety of teaching and learning to take place.									
	B	We have a range of appropriate resources to allow a wide variety of teaching and learning to take place.									
	C	We have a limited range of appropriate resources to allow a wide variety of teaching and learning to take place.									
	D	We lack the appropriate resources to allow a wide variety of teaching and learning to take place.									

Comments

Please comment on any issues of particular concern, including any aspects rated as 'C' or 'D', to highlight good practice and to inform the suitability performance.

Suitability Assessment – All Schools

	Category		Assembly/exam area	Pupil social areas	Dining	Staff rooms
	Internal Social Spaces Weighting: 15%					
Functionality	A	The shape, size and flexibility of internal social spaces fully support individual or group activities.				
	B	The shape, size and flexibility of internal social spaces generally support individual or group activities.				
	C	The shape, size and flexibility of internal social spaces impede the delivery of individual or group activities.				
	D	The shape, size and flexibility of internal social spaces seriously impede the delivery of individual or group activities.				
Accessibility	A	The internal social spaces across the school are accessible to all and fully support inclusion.				
	B	The internal social spaces across the school are accessible to all and generally support inclusion.				
	C	The internal social spaces across the school are only partly accessible and are seen to impede inclusion.				
	D	The internal social spaces across the school have limited accessibility and are seen to seriously impede inclusion.				
Environmental Conditions	A	The environmental conditions within the internal social spaces fully support individual or group activities.				
	B	The environmental conditions within the internal social spaces generally support individual or group activities.				
	C	The environmental conditions within the internal social spaces impede individual or group activities.				
	D	The environmental conditions within the internal social spaces seriously impede individual or group activities.				
Safety & Security	A	Internal social spaces are safe and secure and support socialising and relaxation.				
	B	Internal social spaces are generally safe and secure with minor problems which generally do not impact upon socialising and relaxation.				
	C	Internal social spaces have safety and security issues which impede socialising and relaxation.				
	D	Internal social spaces have safety and security issues which seriously impede socialising and relaxation.				

		Category	Internal Social Spaces Weighting: 15%	Assembly/exam area	Pupil social areas	Dining	Staff rooms
Fixed Furniture & Fittings	A	We have a wide range of appropriate resources to support socialising and relaxation.					
	B	We have a range of appropriate resources to support socialising and relaxation.					
	C	We have a limited range of appropriate resources to support socialising and relaxation.					
	D	We lack the appropriate resources to support socialising and relaxation.					

Comments

Please comment on any issues of particular concern, including any aspects rated as 'C' or 'D', to highlight good practice and to inform the suitability performance.

		Category								
		Internal Facilities Weighting: 15%	Library/learning resource area	Reception	Management offices	Admin offices	Meeting rooms	Staff bases	Toilets	Circulation areas
Fixed Furniture & Fittings	A	We have a wide range of appropriate resources to support the operation of the school.								
	B	We have a range of appropriate resources to support the operation of the school.								
	C	We have a limited range of appropriate resources to support the operation of the school.								
	D	We lack the appropriate resources to support the operation of the school.								

Comments

Please comment on any issues of particular concern, including any aspects rated as 'C' or 'D', to highlight good practice and to inform the suitability performance.

Suitability Assessment – All Schools

Category		External play & social areas
External Social Spaces Weighting: 10%		
Functionality	A	The shape, size and flexibility of the external social spaces fully support individual or group activities.
	B	The shape, size and flexibility of the external social spaces generally support individual or group activities.
	C	The shape, size and flexibility of the external social spaces impede individual or group activities.
	D	The shape, size and flexibility of the external social spaces seriously impede individual or group activities.
Accessibility	A	The external social spaces across the school are accessible to all and fully support inclusion.
	B	The external social spaces across the school are accessible to all and generally support inclusion.
	C	The external social spaces across the school are only partly accessible and are seen to impede inclusion.
	D	The external social spaces across the school have limited accessibility and are seen to seriously impede inclusion.
Environmental Conditions	A	The environmental conditions within the external social spaces fully support individual or group activities.
	B	The environmental conditions within the external social spaces generally support individual or group activities.
	C	The environmental conditions within the external social spaces impede individual or group activities.
	D	The environmental conditions within the external social spaces seriously impede individual or group activities.
Safety & Security	A	External social spaces are safe and secure and support socialising and relaxation.
	B	External social spaces are generally safe and secure with minor problems which generally do not impact upon socialising and relaxation.
	C	External social spaces have safety and security issues which impede socialising and relaxation.
	D	External social spaces have safety and security issues which seriously impede socialising and relaxation.

		Category		External play & social areas
		External Social Spaces Weighting: 10%		
Fixed Furniture & Fittings	A	We have a wide range of appropriate resources to support socialising and relaxation		
	B	We have a range of appropriate resources to support socialising and relaxation.		
	C	We have a limited range of appropriate resources to support socialising and relaxation.		
	D	We lack the appropriate resources to support socialising and relaxation.		

Comments

Please comment on any issues of particular concern, including any aspects rated as 'C' or 'D', to highlight good practice and to inform the suitability performance.

Suitability Assessment – All Schools

	Category	External Facilities Weighting: 10%	Drop-off/pick up areas	Car parks	Circulation	Bike storage	External storage
Functionality	A	The external facilities fully support the wider operation and functioning of the school.					
	B	The external facilities generally support the wider operation and functioning of the school.					
	C	The external facilities impede the wider operation and functioning of the school.					
	D	The external facilities seriously impede the wider operation and functioning of the school.					
Accessibility	A	The external facilities are accessible to all and fully support inclusion.					
	B	The external facilities are accessible to all and generally support inclusion.					
	C	The external facilities are only partly accessible and are seen to impede inclusion.					
	D	The external facilities have limited accessibility and are seen to seriously impede inclusion.					
Environmental Conditions	A	The environmental conditions within the external facilities fully support the operation of the school.					
	B	The environmental conditions within the external facilities generally support the operation of the school.					
	C	The environmental conditions within the external facilities impede the operation of the school.					
	D	The environmental conditions within the external facilities seriously impede the operation of the school.					
Safety & Security	A	External facilities are safe and secure and support the operation of the school.					
	B	External facilities are generally safe and secure with minor problems which generally do not impact upon the operation of the school.					
	C	External facilities have safety and security issues which impede the operation of the school.					
	D	External facilities have safety and security issues which seriously impede the operation of the school.					

Fixed Furniture & Fittings	Category	External Facilities Weighting: 10%	Drop-off/pick up areas	Car parks	Circulation	Bike storage	External storage
	A	We have a wide range of appropriate resources to support the external facilities.					
	B	We have a range of appropriate resources to support the external facilities.					
	C	We have a limited range of appropriate resources to support the external facilities.					
	D	We lack the appropriate resources to support the external facilities.					

Comments

Please comment on any issues of particular concern, including any aspects rated as 'C' or 'D', to highlight good practice and to inform the suitability performance.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

© Crown copyright 2017

OGL

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-78851-441-5

Published by The Scottish Government, November 2017

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS316446 (11/17)

W W W . g o v . s c o t