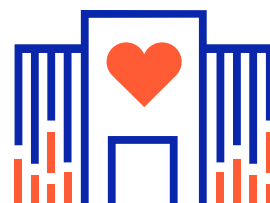


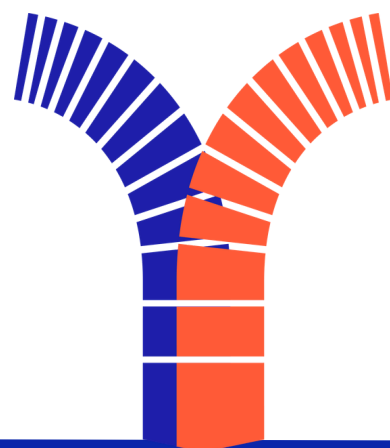


Making more of the physical environment

A brief summary and practical guidance for how schools can use their existing physical environment more creatively and inclusively to support movement, participation, regulation and learning throughout the day.



Well Culture.



The impact

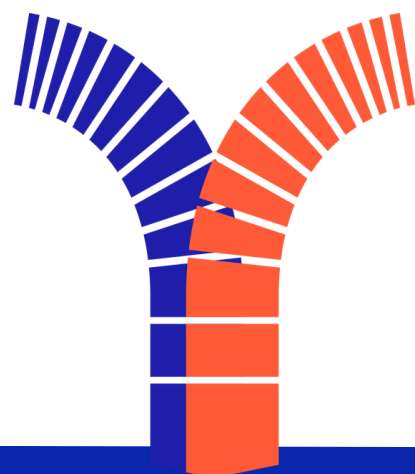
The physical environment can significantly influence how children and young people move, participate, regulate and engage throughout the school day. Creating a movement-friendly environment does not necessarily require additional space, specialist facilities or expensive equipment. It begins with using existing spaces more intentionally.

In this Well Schools conversation, Katie Philips from the Youth Sport Trust encourages leaders to look beyond traditional PE and sport facilities. Classrooms, corridors, halls, outdoor areas and quieter spaces can support active learning, movement breaks, play, regulation and readiness to learn. Schools can begin by reviewing how current spaces, furniture, equipment and routines are used. Small changes—such as making equipment more accessible or using an underused area differently—can unlock opportunities without significant cost. The aim is not to turn every space into an activity area, but to make appropriate movement easier throughout the day.

It is also important to consider who the environment works for. Pupils have different physical, sensory and emotional needs, particularly those with SEND or in Alternative Provision. An inclusive environment offers different ways to move and participate rather than expecting everyone to use spaces in the same way. Pupil voice can help leaders understand where children enjoy moving, feel restricted or experience barriers. Combining these insights with professional judgement can reveal possibilities adults may have overlooked.

Reflect

If you viewed your school environment through pupils' experiences rather than its assigned purposes, what new opportunities or barriers might you notice?





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