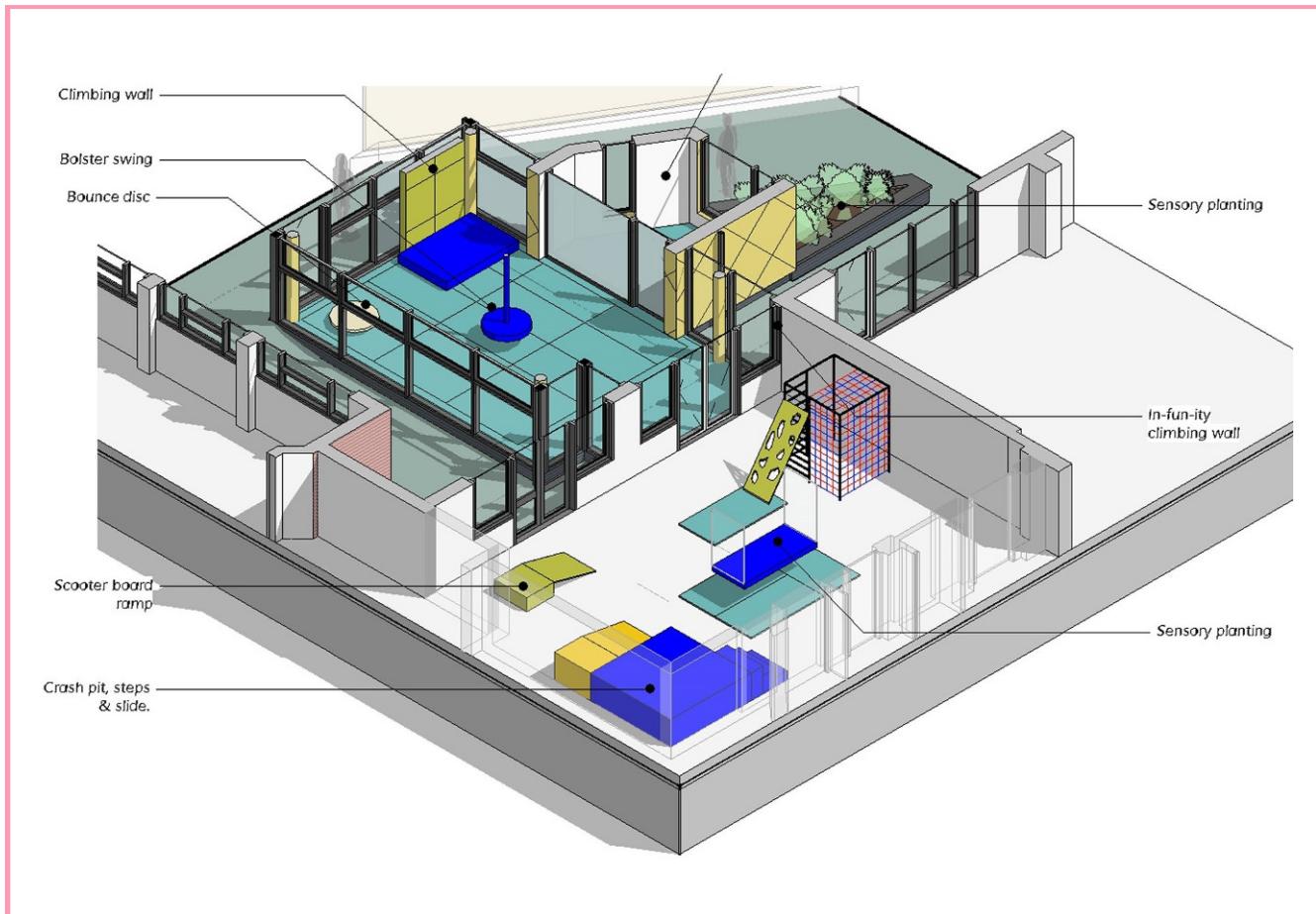




CASE STUDY: EDUCATION OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SUITE





Design approach

As a non-maintained school, West Kirby School caters for children and young adults who have significant and complex needs. These impact directly upon their learning and general access to education and the wider community.

The overall aim when designing the therapy suite was to create a space that was both practical and fun, so that students could ultimately benefit from an environment they enjoyed.

The layout within the classroom stayed largely the same, except for a few small internal alterations. In order to maximise the amount of space available, the store room was removed along with a section of wall.

Outside of the classroom was an existing steel canopy structure which was enclosed with aluminium-framed curtain walling as a part of the works. This ensured bright space inside, allowing as much light back into the existing classroom space as possible. A small 'pod' was constructed to the side of the steel frame structure to provide a secure office for staff,

given a distinct character clad in yellow fibre-cement panels. This helped to brighten up what is a dark and overshadowed part of the school, with the extension surrounded by two and three storey buildings to the north, south and west and an embankment of trees to the east.

The original corrugated metal roof was replaced with an insulated zinc standing seam roof, with aluminium facias and trims to match. Cross-ventilation was incorporated into the design, with top-hung openings allowing for this.

A range of occupational therapy equipment is provided within the new facility, including a physiotherapy swing which has been fixed to the ridge of the roof structure within the extension.

The main classroom is designed to provide a variety of activities for users of all abilities, with a combination of large static equipment including a mobile swing and crash pit.

CASE STUDY: EDUCATION

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SUITE

Name of Building

Occupational Therapy Suite

Completion Date

5th June 2017

Project Cost

£157,928

Building Type

Education

Location

Meols Drive, West Kirby

Client

West Kirby School

Contractor

Taylormade Construction (NW)

**Building Overview**

West Kirby School's purpose-built Occupational Therapy Suite was completed in June 2017 and provides an innovative therapy space for physically able users between 5 and 19 years old.

The specialist facility, designed to meet the needs of younger people on the Autism spectrum, offers large static equipment and smaller portable items to encourage learning within a supportive setting while maintaining the well-being and welfare of the students.

To meet the school's requirements for the foreseeable future, our suite design focused on key elements of space and flexibility. Refurbishment of one of the classrooms and conversion of an adjacent steel canopy structure into an enclosed additional room meant the linked space was ideal for therapy activities.

Once built, the original 32sqm footprint of the classroom increased by another 12sqm. Within the additional space created is a small staff area, partitioned off from the therapy suite to allow privacy with internal windows still allowing supervision of the therapy spaces.

The innovative, modern design of the therapy suite contrasts well with the traditional Victorian feel of the main building. This refurbishment outlines the school's intention to meet varied and complex needs of present and future students within the Wirral and Meols Drive Conservation Area and reinforces its inclusive philosophy.