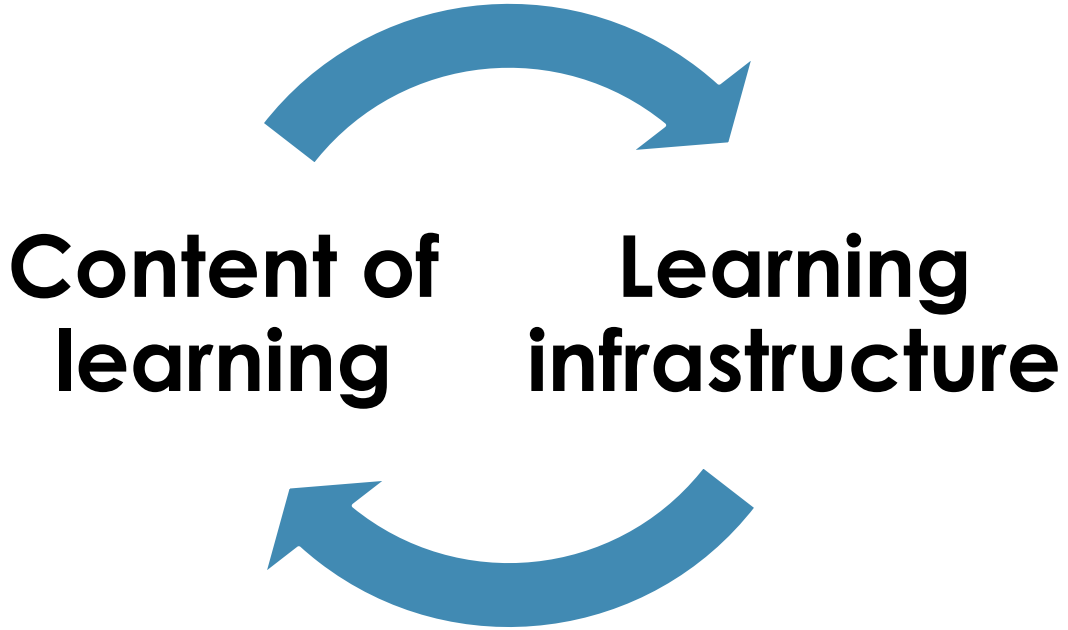
Perspectives on School Infrastructure

A BRITISH EXAMPLE

Objectives of the research

- To bring evidence for “good infrastructure” for quality learning
- To give suggestions for future investment in long-term learning infrastructure

An interdependent cycle



Research questions

- What learning spaces are available in the school?
- What are the children's views?
- What are the teachers' views?
- Which suggestions can be made for lifelong quality learning?

The school

- A typical primary community school in North East England
- 151 pupils in roll, some with special needs and learning difficulties
- Range of spaces: Specialist language Class, Early Years Unit, Computer Room, Library, Community Garden, PE area etc.

Data collection

- Observation of school
- Preparatory focus group interview with teachers
- Photographing the school
- Diamond ranking activity with children
- Diamond ranking activity with teachers
- Semi-structured interview with the head

Early Years Unit: playground

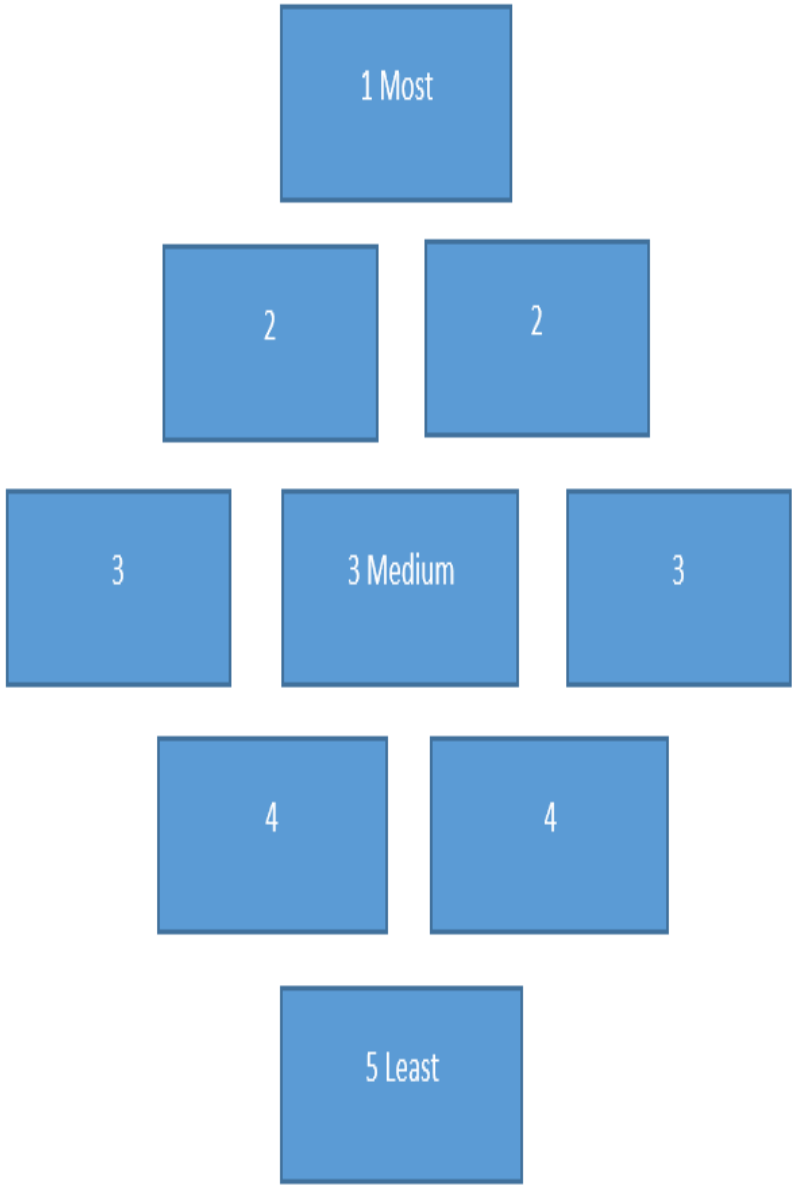
Year 2 classroom

Carpet space

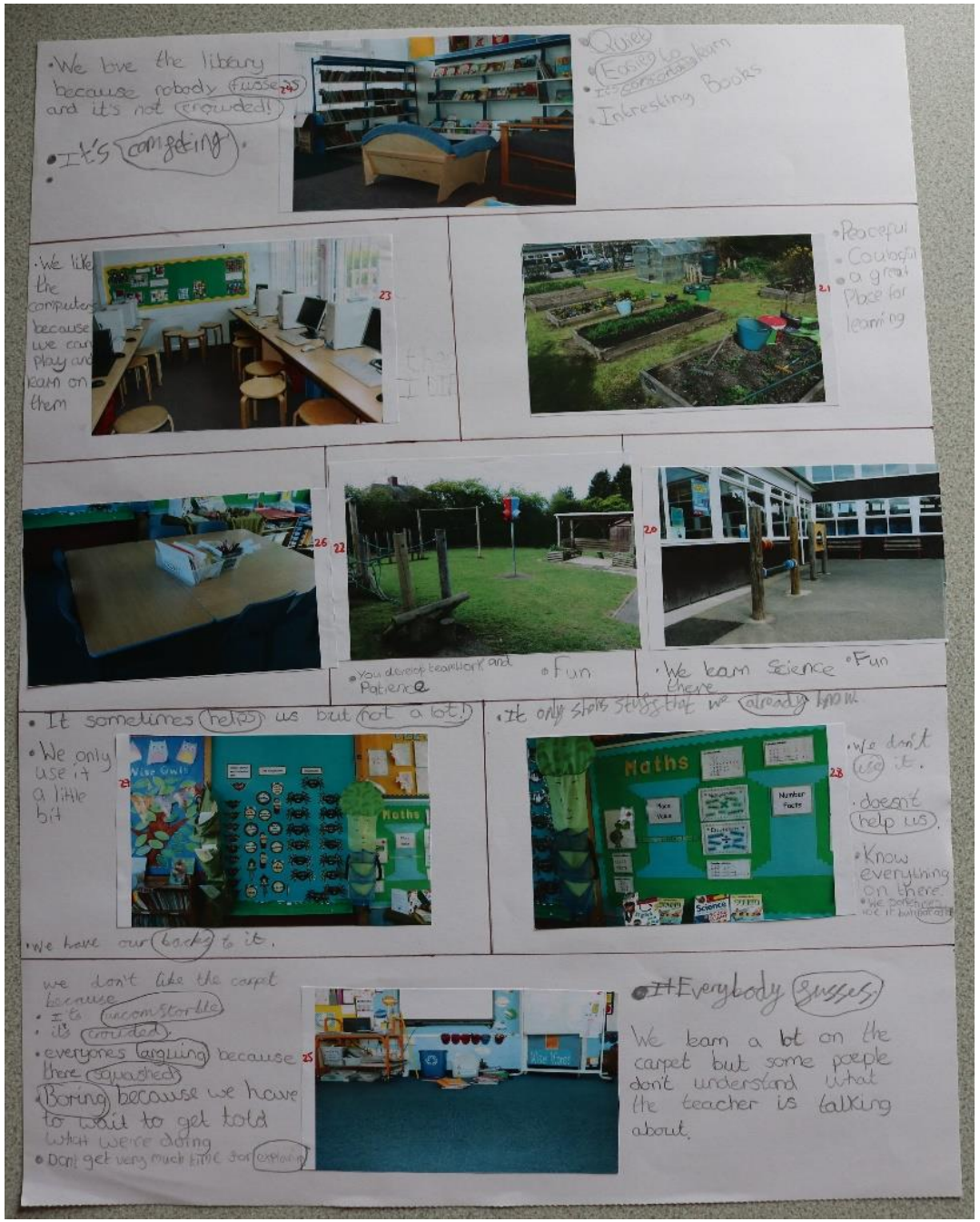
Table space

What do children feel about their spaces?

How do teachers evaluate effectiveness of the spaces in terms of learning?



Diamond ranking activity in Year 4



Research outcomes

Teachers:

- Computers and books as main sources of learning
- Computer room, carpet space and school garden as main spaces for learning

Speaking of carpet space:

Teachers

"When they (children) are on carpet, they are less distracted by peers, and all of them are close to you".

Children

"It's boring, because you have to sit quietly and wait for ages to be told what you are going to do".

Research outcomes

Children:

- School garden and large playground as top ranked spaces for learning and cooperation
- Carpet space and classroom displays as least favorite spaces

Discussion of results

- Different school spaces directly influence pupils' behavior and liking of school
- Investment spaces, such as interactive whiteboards, computer rooms, furniture etc. need to be bought or renewed after consideration of needs of curricula

- There is a rising need for the expansion of garden and outdoor spaces in schools and in curricula
- Different spaces supporting individual, pair, group and collaborative learning ought to be created
- There is a need for spaces that support learning of gifted children, as well as those with special needs and learning difficulties

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Thank you!