

Currie Community High – new school will be one of the first built to Passivhaus standards

A groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday marks the beginning of the build phase of the new Currie Community High School.

The Education Secretary and the Education Convener attended the early morning ceremony along with the current Headteacher of Currie Community High School and the Regional Director of Kier Construction North & Scotland who will lead on construction.

This will be one of the first in Scotland built to Passivhaus standards – this is an energy standard which reduces the amount of energy needed for heating by up to 90%. The total energy used is reduced by 70% and carbon emissions are also minimised.

The new building will offer the community daytime, evening and weekend access to an intergenerational community hub. Visitors can drop in to the library space in the foyer, access meeting rooms and digital services, visit the café, keep healthy at the gym and pool or enjoy a walk around the grounds. There will also be public allotments.

The school will have a series of learning zones for pupils with breakout areas which include:

- Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) over three levels with dual-teaching classrooms, science labs, technician areas and a learning plaza
- Languages and Humanities with dual-teaching classrooms, learning plaza and a debating chamber
- Expressive Arts with music rooms, a recording studio, art studios including a kiln room, dance studios, drama studio and stage
- Health and Wellbeing with a gym hall, games hall, fitness suite and swimming pool, food technology and hospitality
- Integrated Support with wellbeing hub, support for learning classroom, a sensory room and a sensory garden

Cllr Joan Griffiths said: “These are exciting times for the Currie school community as there are so many innovative elements to the plans which have energy efficiency at their centre. This will make the new campus one of the first high schools in Scotland to meet Passivhaus standards and supports Edinburgh’s aim of net zero emissions by 2030.

“The new school will provide a first-class learning setting and be an exciting, inspirational and creative hub for the whole community which will meet both future educational and environmental needs. I’m delighted to see such a strong emphasis on outdoor learning with the creation of a special terrace and how the outdoor spaces will promote sustainability for the school and local community.

Education Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville said: “This new school will provide an inspiring learning environment for around 1,000 pupils and will benefit generations to come. It has been a privilege for me to break the ground here today on this fantastic addition to the area and to hear what a difference this completed project will make to pupils and the wider community.

“The project will be completed using support from the first phase of the £2 billion Learning Estate Investment Programme

(LEIP), which is managed by the Scottish Futures Trust and will benefit tens of thousands of pupils across Scotland.”

Jenny Hutchison, Currie Community High School Head Teacher, said: “It was great to be at the event as everyone can now see the construction taking place on the site of the new school. We’re so incredibly excited about what our new school has to offer as a learning and community campus with an amazing energy around curriculum development and how we ensure that young people develop the skills to be 21st century ready.

“As one of the first Passivhaus schools in Scotland, we are committed to energy efficiency for the benefits of our young people and community. The opportunities for intergenerational learning are endless with transformational learning spaces both inside the building and out.”

Phil McDowell, Regional Director for Kier Construction North & Scotland, said: “This really is a unique project, which not only creates an outstanding new school, but its vast range of facilities will bring important socio-economic benefits to the local area. Everything about the new school has been designed with the focus of minimising energy usage and creating a healthy environment for generations to come.

“We’re proud to continue our successful relationship with the City of Edinburgh Council to deliver this fantastic new facility for the community of Currie.”

The new school will help Edinburgh meet its net zero target in 2030 and will also deliver services closer to where people live, a key part of the 20 minute neighbourhood strategy which is one of the council’s key policies.



Back row Head Teacher Jenny Hutchison, Education Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville and Education Convener Cllr Joan Griffiths.

Front: Pupils Emma Banks and Sanjay Kumar.