



**Corbets Tey School**

# **Soft Play Building Project Progress**

**As at 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2017**



## Project History

This project became necessary because the school's very valued, but extremely dilapidated, soft play facilities needed to be updated and renovated. The 'temporary' modular building housing the soft play room equipment had been repaired and patched up over the thirty years that it had been standing in our secondary playground but had unfortunately reached the end of its life. The soft play facility is an extremely popular resource, well loved by the children and an essential learning space that contributes so much to the children's physical, emotional and social development as well as their wellbeing and self confidence in experimenting, exploring and trying out new activities. This space provides an effective and positive motivating factor in their communication, interaction and engagement in learning.

Initial plans were to replace this building on a similar footprint with another building of a similar size. Then Jim Taylor visited the school and inspired a more ambitious project. He set about raising funds to start the project off and commissioned, and covered the cost, for a professional fundraising video to be made to promote the cause. He then organised a Boxing Night at the Prince Regent Hotel raising over £20k in one night.

## Early Planning and Tender

A Project Manager was appointed and with Jim's guidance and support, plans were drawn up for a two storey extension to the side of the school to provide a larger soft play room, smaller office/therapy space and two classroom spaces to the upper floor. Jim had generously pledged from the start of his involvement that he would provide materials for the construction of the extension building and it was original anticipated that this would bring down the cost considerably. However when this was sent out to tender and initial prices were received the labour only quotes were much higher than expected.

Jim came to the rescue once again and pledged not only to provide the materials but the labour too and when the tenders were re-issued, Jim's company, MixIt Concrete Ltd., tendered for the construction of the double story building for a grand total of £1,000. As they were, not surprisingly, the winning tender, MixIt were appointed and set about planning the job with the Project Manager.

## Fundraising

As there would be other costs to cover such as the electrical and plumbing works, internal fittings such as doors, windows, sanitary fixtures and fittings, alarm extensions, new soft play fit-out as well as the project management costs, the school applied for grant funding to cover this. The total needed for all of these additional costs is £260k. The Parents and Friends Association (PFA) have generously funded the initial project management/planning stage costs to enable the project to start. Other costs have been met from charitable grant funding secured by the PFA of £135k and local fundraising including Jim Taylor's Boxing nights and Steve Eldridge's Golf Days total £80k.

## Construction

Work commenced on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and the builders worked relentlessly and selflessly throughout the summer holiday period to progress to a stage where the building site was safe for the children to return to school in September.





Grant Beglan arranged for asbestos to be removed from several areas of the school at no cost, for which we are extremely grateful.



The old toilets were demolished and foundations were dug out. Unfortunately the wet weather hindered progress at this point and the footings had to be dug out and immediately filled in with concrete in sections to stop the rain filling up the holes as soon as they were dug out!



### Steelwork

To the amazement of the project manager, the steel framework was constructed in one day, which he commented can take up to a whole week.



### Health and Safety

The initial plumbing and electrical works were also completed as far as possible during the holidays and but the time the children and staff returned to school, the builders had completely boarded any access to the site from the school and boarded the outside area so



that not only the children could not access the site but also could not see the site. Their attention and commitment to health and safety and safeguarding was exemplary to the level that they began to lecture us at the school on health and safety!



## Progress to Date

At the end of the summer the extension had lower floor external walls and the path to the emergency exit to the school had been repaired and re-laid. Internal walls had been demolished and rebuilt to create a large upper floor classroom and two storage rooms. All walls had been re-plastered and painted.



New toilets had been installed and a remodelled staircase and lobby area had been created.



## Additional Works

The old soft play modular building is still in place and the school has continued to use this so the children did not miss access to this beneficial activity. Hopefully this will remain safe to use until we can move into the new facility. Jim Taylor has also offered to remove the old building when we are ready. During the construction period the school car park surface was damaged because of the large lorries and cranes that had to drive through the school. Jim is currently seeking a local tarmac company to resurface this for the school once the project is finished. Original plans included an outside canopy area so that pupils can benefit from the outside space in inclement weather. The school will not be able to fund this from the income secured for this project and therefore we continue to fundraise separately for these aspects of the project.

Currently, the internal walls are being built and internal electrical work is progressing well. We will soon have a roof and then further internal work will continue.



The predicted completion date is still expected to be in December. Initial quotes have been obtained for soft play equipment and a hoist to make the room fully accessible to all. It is hoped that these can be installed during the Christmas holiday period or the February 2018 half term holiday.

We cannot begin to express our thanks to Jim for his considerable financial generosity and to Bill, the foreman, and all of the contractors and workmen on this project who have been so committed, working so hard to make this happen for our very special children and other children in the community that need these facilities. We are also so grateful to all charitable grant funders and to everyone who has raised funds and/or contributed towards this project financially or through goods, services or positive thoughts!