

Innovative school design focus on personalised learning

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An article recently published on the [NSW Education Department](#)'s website highlighted how principal Unity Taylor-Hill has quickly made a name for Anzac Park Public School as one of the state's most innovative schools, both in teaching methods and building design.

Anzac Park Public School in Cammeray – which started with 76 students in 2016 now accommodates 640 students and is one of the state's first multi-storey schools built on less than one hectare of land.

Taylor-Hill said the architects' brief was to think deeply about how school design could support student learning, paying attention to aspects like light and how students moved around the school.

Personalised learning and collaboration are stand-out features of a school where students learn in 'caves', 'campfires' and 'watering holes'.

Taylor-Hill told Education Secretary Mark Scott in the latest episode of the Every Student Podcast that these learning archetypes were based on research on different learning behaviours of students.

Campfire is where students learn from an expert, which could be a teacher, another teacher or a global videoconference; the cave is an opportunity for silence, reflection and deep focus; and watering holes for collaboration.

"We see in a lot of our agile work environments those opportunities for cave, campfire and watering hole as a natural part of today's work environment," she said.

The learning spaces support the school's focus on personalised learning.

"We believe that no matter where a student is we need to move them forward with their learning, regardless of that starting point – it is important for our teachers to have a really strong knowledge of what their students are learning and where their students are up to."

That responsibility is also given to students, with students from Kindergarten encouraged to articulate their learning goals in literacy and numeracy. Last year in Term 1, 40% of Kindergarten students were able to say what their goals were and by the end of Term 4 that figure had risen to 94%.

Taylor-Hill is currently director of the department's School Learning Environments and Change, using her experience setting up Anzac Park Public School to work with school leaders and teachers to work effectively within innovative learning environments.