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Mr Liam Burke

Principal

Whitecross National School

Julianstown

Co Meath

14th November 2016

Report on Health & Safety visit to Whitecross National School Julianstown Co Meath by
MRSK Safety Consultants Ltd

Further to our Health & Safety inspection to Whitecross National School on Monday 14th November 2016 the following report will outline observations made in relation to the condition of the school and the attached temporary buildings.

This report does not take into account previous written observations and concerns submitted by teachers to the principal.

When drafting up this report the primary legislation taken into consideration was:

The 2005 Safety Health & Welfare at Work Act.

The 2007 Safety Health & Welfare at Work Act (General Application Regulations).

The 1981 & 2003 Fire Services Acts.

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General observations on the complex

Whitecross National School is situated on the outskirts of the village of Julianstown Co Meath and is adjacent to the N1 Roadway

The school has in excess of 400 students and 28 staff members

The composition of the school comprises of the original school building circa 1951 and 10 temporary rooms (Porta cabins) ranging in age and condition.

Several Health & Safety concerns have been highlighted by staff in the past, there is quite a large file documented on record.

Observations

External

The school playground is quite close to the main road (Original N1 and one of the link roads from Drogheda - East Meath and the M1 motorway) with only a low wall and entrance gates separating the playground from the roadway, this leaves the children exposed to straying out on to the roadway or trespass from persons outside the perimeter wall without much difficulty.

- There is an abundant of fall, trip hazards within the school yard ranging from severe uneven and cracked surfaces to footpaths proud of the surrounding grass verges. (See Photo)



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- With the large number of temporary class rooms and extensive play area it is quite difficult for staff to monitor the entire play area during class breaks.
- The Storage oil tank is very close to one of the porta cabins and does not have a bund surrounding it. Fire and pollution risk
- The travel distance from porta cabins to the main building is quite excessive, this creates anxiety among students and children particularly in adverse weather conditions.
- The staff car park opens out on to the main road on a continuous white line with no traffic calming measures in place.
- There is a lot traffic congestion around the school entrance gate and roadway when parents are dropping off and collecting children from school

The original school

- The majority of windows in the school are original wooden framed single glazes giving very little or no insulation. It is alarming to see the amount of condensation on these windows which is not conducive to a healthy class room environment.



- Some of the window frames are rotten
- The heating system is original (single pipe gun barrel) and is inefficient with evidence of corroded piping throughout the building which needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency (See Photo)

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- There is evidence of substandard insulation throughout the building
- Toilet and washroom facilities are not sufficient for the number of children using them. There is evidence of leaking piping underneath the flooring. (See Photo)



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- The lack of storage space is evident through the school with cloakrooms and class rooms being used to store materials, this is a serious fire risk and trip hazard. (See Photo)



- The single staff toilet and washroom is totally inadequate for the number of teachers, this facility is in the original school. To use this facilities teachers in the porta cabins have to leave their class room sometimes in adverse weather and travel cross the school yard to avail of this facility.
- Teachers staff room again is totally inadequate for the number of teachers in the school. There is no alternative escape exit from this room. This staff room also doubles as a class room at times.
- The room where the electrical switch board for the school is situated is being used as a learning support room. The doors protecting the switch boards are made of ply wood with no fire rating, also the door and walls of this room have no fire rating whatsoever . (All electrical distribution boards should be enclosed in a fire resistant construction and any doors or access panels fitted will also require similar fire resistant panelling.)

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- The lighting throughout the school is inadequate with no diffusers fitted to ceiling fluorescent lighting. The children and teachers are not protected from shattering fluorescent tubes.
- The electrical wiring requires upgrading.
- The existing fire alarm and detection system in the building does not comply with the current standards, it is not feasible to upgrade this system without installing a complete new installation.
- The emergency lighting system in the building does not conform with current standards and requires replacing.
- All fire extinguishers do not conform with current specifications and require replacing
- An issue of concern, there is no designated lockable storage room or cabinet for chemicals which are used on a daily basis.

Security

- Security is lacking within the school complex, one of the concerns being the amount of external doors and openings with little or no security or locking mechanisms on them

External Buildings

- There are 10 porta cabins attached to the school ranging in age and condition. Some of the porta cabins have independent fire alarm systems (which do not conform to current standards) with the remainder not having any fire alarm and detection systems at all.

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All porta cabins should have a fire alarm and detection system conforming to current standards, all buildings should be interlinked to the main building.

- There is inadequate Emergency lighting in the porta cabins. This lighting does not conform to current standards.
- There is evidence of leaking ceilings in some of the porta cabins
- The heating system is electric storage heating which is not efficient or cost effective. Some of the storage heaters have protective guarding around them and others do not thus endangering the children who come in contact with them.
- Children's work is displayed above some of the storage heaters this is a fire risk and endangers the children.



- Storage is of grave concern within the porta cabins as there is inadequate storage space throughout. Areas used to store school materials and children's clothing are in close proximity to the electrical switch boards.

I trust you will find this report in order but please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further assistance, may I once again emphasise this report is a brief synopsis of my visit to Whitecross National School.

Ensuring you of a professional service at all times.

Yours Sincerely

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