

* Education



Birdwell Primary School

Case Study

Location

Barnsley, South Yorkshire, UK

Date

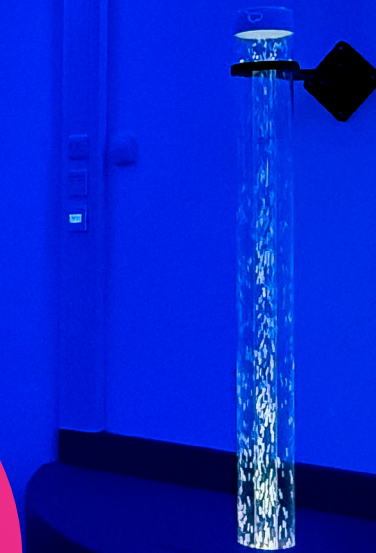
April 2026

Project

Aurora sensory room for
primary education

Product

x1 small sensory corner



About Birdwell Primary School

Birdwell Primary School is a welcoming and inclusive primary school based in Barnsley, South Yorkshire. Led by Headteacher Rich Swallow, the school has a dedicated team of 14 staff committed to providing a supportive learning environment for all pupils.

The school serves a broad range of learners, including a number of children with additional needs who require tailored support to access their individual curriculums. Ensuring every child has the opportunity to learn with greater independence is central to the school's approach.

The opportunity

Several children at Birdwell Primary School have additional needs that make it difficult to access their individual curriculums without close adult direction. The school recognised that a dedicated sensory space could give these pupils the opportunity to engage with set activities more independently, in an environment that felt safe and calm.

The aim was straightforward: create a space where children could self-regulate, access structured activities with less reliance on adult support and feel confident doing so. The school was particularly focused on younger pupils in EYFS and KS1, where early access to a calm, stimulating environment can make a real difference. But like many primary schools, Birdwell had to work within a tight SEND budget. The question wasn't just whether a sensory space would help, it was whether a meaningful one was achievable at all.

The space before



The process

Birdwell Primary School is a small school with a modest budget, and the team were initially concerned that the scale of the project might not attract the right level of attention from a specialist provider. That concern was quickly put to rest.

From the very first conversation, Aurora made it clear that every project matters, regardless of size. The team was given access to expert design knowledge and cost-effective resource providers that suited the school's budget. Pricing, timescales, and expectations were kept completely transparent throughout, so there were no surprises along the way.

The install itself was carried out with minimal disruption. The fitters worked carefully around the working classroom next door, communicating well with staff and getting on with the job efficiently. From Rich's perspective, it just happened behind the scenes, which is exactly what a busy school needs.

“The workmen on site were great and worked around the setting and communicated well. We're really pleased with how it all just happened behind the scenes.” Rich Swallow, Headteacher.

**On recommending Aurora to others,
Rich added:**

“Absolutely! They are thoroughly professional from start to finish and communication is excellent. We felt, at every stage, that the team wanted us to get the outcome we wanted and there was no upselling or not taking into account what we asked for.”

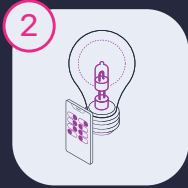
Rich Swallow, Headteacher, Birdwell Primary School



The sensory room plans



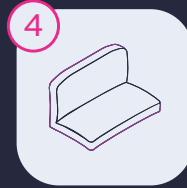
Air tube



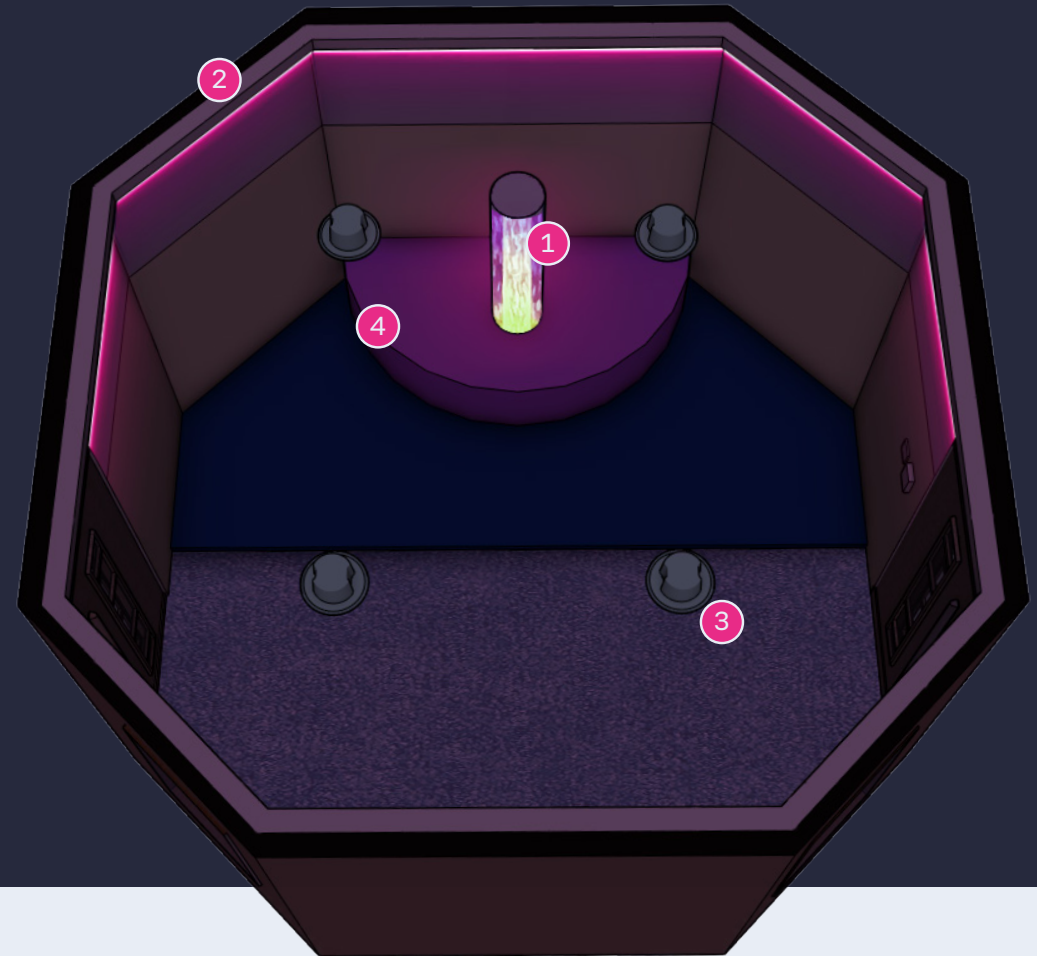
Ambient lighting



Audio system



Padded furniture



The solution

Aurora designed and installed a compact sensory corner created around the needs of Birdwell's younger pupils. It shows that effective sensory provision doesn't need a large space or a significant investment. Even a small area can make a real difference when it is designed with the right purpose in mind.

The space combines sound and lighting effects with a calm, welcoming layout to create an environment where children can begin to self-regulate and engage with activities more independently. The intuitive setup means staff can introduce the space with minimal instruction, and pupils can begin to use it in a way that feels natural and accessible to them.

The result is a dedicated environment that sits alongside the existing curriculum rather than replacing it, giving children an additional route into learning that works for them.

The impact was evident from the very first sessions. Pupils responded positively to the space, and the reaction from children visiting for the first time was something the whole team noticed immediately.

Key outcomes have included:



Greater independence

Improved independence for pupils with additional needs, who can now access activities with less reliance on adult direction.



Improved regulation and engagement

Sound and lighting effects help pupils regulate more effectively and engage more confidently in activities.



Support for pupils of all ages

Older pupils with sensory needs have also benefited, gaining greater autonomy over their own self-regulation.



Increased staff confidence

Staff feel confident using the space, supported by its clear purpose and the positive outcomes seen so far.

The reach of the space extended beyond its original intention. Several older pupils with sensory needs have expressed interest in using the room, and their results have been equally encouraging. It is a good example of a resource that does more than it was designed to do.

“A massive thank you for making this project happen at Birdwell. We took some pupils in for the first time yesterday and it was such a pleasure to see their reaction. The staff and I are so grateful!”

Rich Swallow, Headteacher, Birdwell Primary School





To find out how we can bring your next project to life,
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