A school to delight the senses, where taste, touch, smell and an awareness of surroundings could help promote a sense of independence and could act as sensory cues.

Early diagrams, circulation, easy to follow routes and access.
Ideas for a storage and sensory wall as cue

Wrapping around trees and embracing natural landscape

A well defined route, with stepping stone markers
Early classroom sketch.
Connection with landscape and ambient light

Early sketch of street and storage wall, first idea of wall as sensory cue
Initial sketches of school in the landscape, wrapping around existing beech trees and following natural contours

Early idea for garden classrooms, open but secure
Early entrance sketches, non institutional but not domestic

North elevation broken down to respond to neighbouring street scale
Early section, encouraging north light and opening out to the south garden. Shallow roof pitch. School sits low on the ground.

Early idea of protected courtyard gardens, both sides of a central street.
Investigation of colour as a navigational cue

...and brick as a third material to complement the larch and zinc
South Elevation, garden with beech trees

West elevation, showing hydrotherapy pool curved wall and entrance
East elevation, slate screen against the traffic

Cross section
Development sketches of south garden and cross section
1. Entrance
2. Administration
3. Pool and Gym
4. Sensory Wall
5. Classrooms
6. Senior School
7. Life skills House
Architecturally, Hazelwood School is a new type of project. The children and young people who attend will never be able to lead totally independent lives and will need lifetime support.

I was determined to create a school which would support the needs of the children and the aspirations of their parents, a place of safety and ambition that would free the teacher and inspire the child. Hazelwood School has been a real success. The children and young people respond well to their new environment and appear to be thriving. They are supported by committed teachers in a bespoke school that their parents love and take ownership of.

Alan Dunlop Architect