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WHEN Mark and Jo Wadsworth move into their new home later this year, it will be like going back to the classroom for the Halifax couple.

Mark, a joiner, and his wife are converting the 19th century former Luddenden Infant School into a spacious home and plan to move in before Christmas.

The Church of England school, which was built in 1874, closed a year ago and pupils were transferred to the new Luddenden Dene Junior School.

The couple, who have a two-year-old daughter Kitty, made a quick decision to buy the Victorian school after driving past and noticing that it was up for sale.

They had been looking for a home to buy but were impressed by the character and the reasonable price of the old school building.

Mark, who plays for Halifax Rugby Union Club, said: "Structurally, the school is fine. The roof and walls are in very good condition so the majority of the work is inside the building."

The couple plan to create a four-bedroomed home, which will have a 25ft lounge and a granny flat in the ground floor for Mark's mother.

Jo said: "The original mahogany floorboards are still in place. We'll have to lift them, soundproof and varnish them."

"As a joiner, Mark will be able to do most of them work himself. There is also a lovely clover-leaf window and some fine arched trusses. We are making a pine kitchen in the old school entrance porch."

Waiting for permission from the Diocese of Wakefield and Calderdale Council to carry out the conversion had been a frustrating process for the couple who are now keen to press on with the necessary work in their spare time, with the help of Mark's rugby team-mates.

"I have carried out a few conversion jobs for other people so it makes a change to do one for myself," said Mark.