



Arcus Consulting: Case Study

Athersley North Primary School, Barnsley



Project Objectives:

The brief from the Client was to remodel the existing school and provide a new build 'Foundation Unit' that would create a sense of continuity with the existing school and new well defined teaching and user spaces.

The task also provided a challenge to reconfigure the existing areas to allow for community use after school hours. This issue was a key focus for the design as it was recognised that local participation would build support and would give the community a sense of ownership in the process and the school itself.

"Our new Foundation Stage build has an inspirational design and is built to meet the needs of our learners and families, which shows the children and families served by the school how much they are valued. With a kitchen at its heart, the unit creates a home from home setting and provides an environment which enables us to promote and encourage communication, language and literacy. It is a building which supports explorative play and learning so that children can use all their senses to know and understand the world and begin to build a vocabulary to explain their thinking and further develop their ideas and skills. It is a building which supports children as they start their journey as lifelong learners."

Margaret Newcombe the Head Teacher at Athersley North Primary School



Highly Commended Award for Best Sustainable Project



2009



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Arcus Solutions:

The project was achieved by rationalising and optimising the use of the existing and new space which was also designed to accommodate additional services such as the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and Special Education Needs Co-ordinators (SENCO) within the existing footprint.

During the period of initial scheme design, the school, local authority and community were engaged in the design development to help arrive at an end result which was to everyone's satisfaction.

Sustainability issues were tackled seriously, and the chosen form of construction inherently energy saving. The new build Foundation Unit is naturally lit and is provided with cross ventilation routes to ensure adequate ventilation and to avoid overheating. Specially designed window shapes and re opened roof lights in the corridors also help bring in plenty of natural light to the school resulting in the reduced use of artificial light.

Other energy saving features such as a ground source heat pump, under floor heating, daylight and movement sensors, energy efficient lighting and 100% recyclable materials are just some of the sustainable elements included in the design and construction.

Both the new and refurbished entrance areas are designed to DDA standards. They are highly visible, generous and welcoming.

Arcus also worked closely with the Contractor and the school to ensure the work areas were suitably segregated from the occupied areas, ensuring that the school could operate safely during the works. As works progressed through the school, fire procedures were regularly revised and agreed with the school to suit the changes in access and egress. The contractor's compound was set up with designated areas for storage, off loading, welfare and circulation. Materials were moved around site using these designated circulation routes to ensure no interaction between the contractor and the children.

Delivering Innovation:

The Foundation Unit is unique and innovative in its design. A new concept in education has been developed to focus the learning process around a central theme of 'healthy food' and 'good eating habits'. All the activities in the new build foundation revolve around a kitchen area which is designed to take into consideration the differing human scales using the areas (e.g. from the youngest pupil to adults) utilising such items as 'drop down counters'.

The Foundation Unit also boasts a unique "glass courtyard" which replicates and creates the natural outdoor environments indoors. This indoor area, which includes play areas, sand pits, water streams, fountains and mini garden facilities, will not only provide a safer environment to learn and play but actively encourage the pupils to appreciate natural elements.

The new and refurbished entrances harmonise to establish a coherent education and community facility that will help to instil renewed confidence within the local area.

The remodelling of the school and design principles applied, enables the school to be utilised for community use after school hours. The core activities of the school are grouped to create better access to facilities such as IT and the Library, for use over extended hours.



Overview:

Client: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Disciplines: Designer, Project Manager and Associated Professional Services

Value: £1.6m



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