

Case Study

Forest Way School



Delivered for Leicestershire County Council

Facilities: 153 place special school in Coalville | December 2008
Value: £9.75 million



Forest Way School



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Introduction

Forest Way opened in January 2009, and caters for 153 young people, aged between 3 and 19 years with a range of behavioural, physical and learning disabilities. It replaced an existing school on a constrained site with poor access.

Key Facts

- Awarded the Times Educational Supplement Award for Outstanding Primary School in 2009
- Wind turbine delivers nearly 10% of the school's electricity needs
- Since opening, incidents of challenging behaviour among pupils fallen by two-thirds

Details

The aspiration was to create an exemplar special school with an interactive forest heart and curved corridors decorated with giant woodland pictures to give it a friendly, warm feel. The distinctive features include a swimming pool with lights and sound above and below the water, a unique drama/virtual reality studio that stimulates key senses through vibrating chairs and fragrance machines. It also has a science laboratory and sensory rooms.

Successes

When the client raised £500,000 in additional funding to facilitate design enhancements, Willmott Dixon seamlessly incorporated this into the construction process, often at short notice.

Pupils helped design acoustic banners, mosaic tiles and sculptures within the courtyard. To remove the sense that the school was an 'institution', parents wanted the straight access corridor transformed into a curved walkway.

The completed scheme was delivered early, on budget and since opening, incidents of challenging behaviour among pupils has fallen by two-thirds.

Sustainable achievements

- Wind turbine provides nearly 10 per cent of electricity
- Recycled rain water to flush toilets
- Planted over 1500 spring bulbs in a joint day with pupils

Community initiatives

A commitment to the local supply chain resulted in 56% of the value of the packages being spent within a 30 mile radius of the site. This was a significant boost to the local economy of the county.

BREEAM Rating

A rating of "Very Good" was achieved, using in-house assessors from Re-Thinking.

Testimonials

Lynn Slinger, Headteacher, Forest Way

"You should be very proud of the quality of your staff, it has been a pleasure working with them, nothing is too much trouble for them."

Parent, Forest Way

"A marvellous school which required such vision and attention to detail to come into being. It was a privilege to listen to the enthusiasm of the staff and to know that the students who have such serious disabilities have a wonderful place to enjoy and reach their full potential, however limited that may be. Congratulations to all concerned."

Times Educational Supplement Judges, 2009

"The building has flair, imagination and functionality. This outstanding project combines a range of aesthetics with a brilliant choice of materials. We are delighted by the massive child and parent involvement to create it."

Contact

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