



Education – Belvue Secondary School SEN Inclusive design and construction



PROJECT

**Belvue Secondary School
Extension and Refurbishment**

CUSTOMER

Ealing Council

LOCATION

London Borough of Ealing

CONTRACT

2 Stage Design and Build

Need

At Belvue secondary school, 25 new pupil places were needed for young people with moderate to severe learning difficulties. As well as an extension, the school would be refurbished to improve the teaching environment with a vision to create a school which felt more like a home than an institution. A place where pupils with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) would be enabled and empowered to participate fully in school life.

Our challenge was to produce an inclusive design that integrated the school's specific needs and could be built safely while students continued to learn and thrive. The key would be modern off-site construction, detailed planning and effective communication.

Solution

Early engagement between the school, our designers Rock Townsend, and Studio Weave - who produced the concept design - was the starting point to share knowledge and safeguard the students.

As a result, early decisions were taken to

reduce the impact on school life through:

- Off-site manufacturing which was maximised to move large elements of the build away from the school and into a factory-controlled environment.
- Scheduling work into five phases which allowed major installations to be undertaken in holiday periods. The phasing also ensured that the new build extension was fully open before the refurbishment works commenced.

From the outset, it was important to understand access arrangements, pupil welfare needs and exam periods. This deep understanding meant we could maintain a fully functioning school:

- There was no change to fire escape routes, assembly points or pick up and drop off locations for the pupils.
- General access routes were completely segregated from the works using a physical barrier.
- All deliveries were programmed to avoid peak times for pupil movements and to avoid exam periods and events.

One of the first activities in the 'live' school environment was demolition. To manage the impact, plans were agreed with the school for noise, dust, and vibration

reduction measures. Of critical importance was asbestos which was fully enclosed and transported in certified sealed containers. Everyone was kept safe.

Outcome

Early and continued engagement has delivered results. Now, movement through the school has been simplified with a welcoming new reception area and breakout spaces for students, staff and visitors which flows through to an informal dining area, acting as a 'heart' to the school. Visually, the use of timber and colour provides warmth and a sense of calm to fulfil the school's desire to feel more like a home than an institution.

The whole school has automated forced ventilation, photovoltaic cells and a new Green Roof has contributed to an improved learning environment and to achieving BREEAM Very Good.

The council have created 25 new SEND places in the borough and together, we have maintained a safe nurturing environment throughout the build to deliver a more inclusive school for SEND students.