

IMAGES: Beccy Lane

KINGSGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

SARAH WIGGLESWORTH ARCHITECTS (SWA) WERE APPOINTED IN 2017, WORKING WITH ARCHITECTS COLLABORATIVE, TO DESIGN AN EXTENSION TO THE EXISTING VICTORIAN BUILDINGS OF KINGSGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL, INCLUDING A MULTI-PURPOSE STUDIO, LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY ENTRANCE WITH ACCESSIBLE WC AND STORAGE. THE NEW SPACES CREATE A PLAYFUL AND LIGHT-FILLED ADDITION TO THE SCHOOL.



The London Borough of Camden selected Kingsgate Primary School for expansion to help meet the need for more pupil places in this part of the borough. The existing school site on Kingsgate Road did not offer sufficient space for the required expansion and so a second site was developed to accommodate key stage 1 pupils, freeing up the Kingsgate Road site for the older (KS2) children aged 8 to 11 years old. Considerable adaptation of the existing site was required to create a high quality environment to meet the needs of the children. The extension takes advantage of this opportunity to create an exemplar learning environment for KS2 support, learning and play, designed with children in mind.

The extension was designed to enhance the school's relationship with the adjacent Kilburn Grange Park. The new frontage



to the park provides opportunities for community access with a possible future entrance from the park side. A palette of treated timber cladding and simple zinc roofs addresses the natural setting of the park and establishes the distinctive character of the extension. The internal spaces offer views through the building towards the mature trees beyond, creating a stimulating learning environment.

Key features of the original school building, with its pop up dormer windows, smaller scale roof elements and gable elevations, have been reinterpreted in the form and scale of the extension, enabling it to sit comfortably in the wider school site. The new internal spaces draw on the daylight qualities and proportions of the existing to maximise the amount of natural light. »

THE NEW EXTENSION HAS CHANGED THE WAY THE CHILDREN HAVE PE, ASSEMBLIES AND WORKSHOPS. TEACHERS CAN NOW PLAN TOGETHER AND WE CAN HAVE OUR PARENT/TEACHER MEETINGS ALL IN ONE HALL, RATHER THAN IN CLASSROOMS WHICH WORK FAR BETTER FOR THE SCHOOL AND PARENTS.



Generous pitched ceiling heights create a feeling of spaciousness and daylight enters from multiple directions. Low-level window frame areas for window seats and reading spaces are accompanied by high-level windows and roof lights, which provide views of the sky and assist with natural ventilation.

One of the main challenges of the project was constructing the extension while the school was in operation. On a physically constrained site, the construction programme had to work around the school timetable and deliver the completed extension quickly. The solution was to use structurally insulated panels (SIPs) for the building fabric. These had the advantage of being prepared off-site and then craned into place, condensing the construction programme and minimising the number of deliveries to site. The project was completed in July 2018.

Shelley Dunbar, School Business Manager at Kingsgate Primary School commented: "The new extension has changed the way the children have PE, assemblies and workshops. Teachers can now plan together and we can have our parent/teacher meetings all in one hall, rather than in classrooms which work far better for the school and parents. Children enjoy the library space and have designated library lessons each week. The height of the ceiling makes a huge difference, as does the



double hall space and the size of the library, especially with the reading corner."

Following the completion of the project, the work was awarded an LABC Highly Commended award in the category of Best Educational Building. The LABC Awards are the largest business to business awards in the building control sector, with the LABC Regional Building Excellence Awards recognising quality in all types of building project.

The project has also been shortlisted for a 2019 SPACES Award. The SPACES Awards recognise the multi-disciplinary nature of both SPACES as a society as well as the collaborative nature in which public sector projects are being delivered in their communities, along with the contribution of key project members. The winners of the 2019 SPACES Awards will be announced at a reception on Thursday 17th October. ■



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