

Tilbury Douglas successfully completes UK's first biophilic primary school

2 years ago



Tilbury Douglas, a leading UK building, infrastructure, engineering and fit-out business, has successfully completed the UK's first biophilic primary school as part of an innovative pilot scheme on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary (CV) Academy, dubbed the greenest primary school in the country, was delivered to a fast-track programme, enabled by Modern Methods of Construction (MMC).

The pioneering new eco building located in Derby is part of the St Ralph Sherwin Trust and will welcome pupils and staff in December 2023. The biophilic design focuses on connecting the internal environment with nature, with the goal of promoting physical and mental health.

Moving away from the typical single building accommodation arrangement, St Marys CV Academy is distinctive in plan. Comprising of five single storey buildings, linked by a large covered central walkway, the plan promotes high levels of natural light and access to the surrounding landscape.

The new school also embraces key Construction Playbook themes, being net-zero carbon in operation, low embodied carbon and an MMC exemplar, including a fully embraced digital strategy.

Simon Butler, Regional Building Managing Director – Midlands at Tilbury Douglas, commented: "It is a great achievement by all those involved with this important scheme to see it completed and handed over to the school!"

"As the UK's greenest primary school, and first biophilic school, this DfE pilot project will play a key role in setting future standards for eco-friendly schools of the future. We know the pupils, teachers and wider

community will really benefit from utilising the new facilities.”

The site was selected by the DfE in 2021 as a pilot scheme, following a devastating arson attack that destroyed the previous school.

Tilbury Douglas’ Engineering team undertook the design and installation of this highly thermal efficient building. This included significant amounts of full height glazing to maximise the benefits of natural daylight. Other key MEP strategies included the use of heat pumps, photovoltaics, and intelligent natural ventilations technologies. Post-occupant support will, together with enhanced metering, play a key role in optimising the future operating performance of this building and provide essential data to help inform future standards.

Amanda Greaves, Executive Headteacher at St Mary’s, said: “This move is a hugely positive and long-awaited milestone and we know that pupils and staff will be excited to finally return to Broadway, to a brand new biophilic school.”

Matt Gage, Programme Director at the DfE, said: “We are immensely proud of the role our Risk Protection Arrangement has played in supporting this scheme and building back a better school out of the tragedy of the fire that occurred in 2021. It is a testament to the difference we can make when we work together as a joined-up schools sector.”