

Short of Space? Put the playground on the 1st floor!



PROJECT	Air Balloon Primary School
CLIENT	Bristol Council
CONTRACTOR	Skanska
ARCHITECT	Batterham Matthews Design
VALUE	£5.2m
LOCATION	Bristol
GIFA	1267m ²

"This development has done wonders for the staff, parents and children and transformed this into a very special school. That early vision has now been delivered and we have a fantastic school with wonderful inside and outside spaces. Its completion has been uplifting and everyone who comes to the school remarks how much better the new buildings are."

Rob Worsfold, Headteacher

Limited space to deliver the school requirements

The contractor sought an innovative solution to the demanding design and practicality challenges of creating an energy efficient twelve classroom two-storey school extension with the added complication of tight timescales. The project amalgamated an existing infant and junior school with the new extension linking to existing buildings via a bridge.

The combined school would accommodate 840 pupils, up from 630. The additional places offered by the extension were urgently required to ease Bristol's shortage of primary school places. Predictability during construction was a key concern so that handover could be achieved with minimal disruption to students' learning. The design featured an elevated first-floor playground to maximise space.

1st floor playground on a sustainable i-SIP building

Skanska selected the Innovaré i-SIP System for its rapid build capabilities, flexibility and outstanding performance characteristics. The need to eliminate the transfer of impact and airborne sound was particularly important in the two-storey structure, given classrooms needed

to be sighted directly underneath. Early engagement by the Innovaré design team resulted in the design of a 254mm web beam joist that minimised any movement in the deck. Thorough detailing helped make the fitting of acoustic materials during the internal fit out an easier activity for the follow-on trades.

A uniquely brilliant use of space ensuring the children can remain active all year round

The project transformed teaching and learning by creating exceptional learning spaces in place of outdated and temporary buildings. The large format panels delivered the complete dry structure in five weeks.

The finished buildings combine the best of old and new – 1905 grandeur of the original buildings with 21st century efficiency and beauty. The design paved the way for a new outdoor all-weather court, combining part of the first floor of the extension that doubled as the purpose-built playground. This created a unique use of space that ensured the children could remain active all year round.



“Skanska Building leads the way in sustainable construction in the UK so it's no surprise that we chose to use a range of the highest performing solutions on our primary school programme. The i-SIP System was chosen as the thermal and structural solution due to its performance characteristics, speed of build, cost effectiveness and flexibility. Through the specialist support and professionalism provided by the Innovaré team we have been able to deliver a high quality, thermally efficient, airtight and compliant structure in a shortened programme time to our client. For programme critical builds that need an energy efficient solution we would not hesitate in recommending the use of the i-SIP System.”

Tim Smith, Construction Manager, Skanska Building