

# INNOVATIVE CLASSROOM DESIGN SUPPORTS PERSONALISED LEARNING AND BETTER EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES



An EC Harris led team completed a 'Changing Rooms' type makeover in Southfield Primary School in Ealing as part of National School Environments Week.

The project was extensively covered on BBC Breakfast culminating on the handover on Friday, June 27 2008. The makeover saw three key areas of Southfield Primary School transformed in a five day project to show how educational spaces can be changed to provide improved learning and teaching opportunities for pupils and staff. The EC Harris team worked with Alexi Marmot Associates (AMA) an architectural practice with special expertise in educational and work-space planning transformed the art room in this 100 year old building into an exciting multi-use learning space with an ICT-rich mezzanine floor using the latest thin client technology.

## Creating Solutions

The aim was to show that even the most unlikely space can be transformed with imagination into one in which teachers and children can enjoy learning. Not every school can have the luxury of a new-built environment and his project is a showcase for what a low-cost intervention can achieve. EC Harris was a founder member of the British Council for School Environments (BCSE) in 2003 and welcomed this opportunity to support their commitment to creating exciting learning environments.

**20%**  
increase in floor space

## Case Study | Southfield Primary School

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Although all the work and equipment on the Southfield project was free a detailed costing and programme model will be made available for other schools as part of the upcoming Ealing Primary Capital Programme, and elsewhere. This is an example of our ability to create better learning environments more cost effectively.

EC Harris were responding to an invitation from BCSE to work on the Southfield makeover, and after an initial meeting on May 16th and subsequent consultation with pupils and school staff, the team produced a detailed design. The Wilmot Dixon construction team built this off-site and then re-assembled within 3 days, minimising impact on school life. A 20% increase in floor space was created and the second phase was turning this into an ICT-rich area with full access to all school resources. Southfield's concern with sustainability required doing this with minimal increases in power usage, no heat output or environmental while maximising the impact on teaching and learning - hence the thin client solution.

The mezzanine is large enough for small group and collaborative working, and both pupils and teachers were excited at the potential of the new Art room to support new methods of working with learning spaces that reflect the different ways children like to learn.

### Adding Value

This project showed that the 'one size fits all' model simply does not work. Personalised learning means helping children learn in the way that best helps them do well. The old art room was a space typical of thousands of classrooms, and our challenge was to make it work for today's children, so it can accommodate 'formal' instruction, small group work, collaboration, individualised teaching, and of course effective use of ICT.

Additional work in the Art room, aside from redecorating, included the installation of an interactive white board, supplied and fitted by Steljes, and suspended acoustic panels which removed the echo which had blighted classes since 1906.

The EC Harris Team was supported by the generosity of Novus Technology who are leading proponents of sustainable computing solutions, Modular Cabling Systems who resolved the problems of connectivity, and Hewlett Packard, Citrix, Microsoft and Computacenter Distribution, all of whom contributed resources to this project.

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