

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Better learning

Scape Group

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Our resolve to keep providing the right infrastructure on time and in budget on behalf of local children, local taxpayers and the community at large is as strong as ever



Big challenges demand bold, robust responses. That's what our Scape Bedford programme has delivered to meet the challenge of a growing population, new and growing communities and rising numbers of schoolchildren overall.

We know how important the right buildings and the right facilities are to ensuring that high quality teaching and learning can take place. We owe it to current and future generations of children in Bedford borough to provide our schools with those facilities, to support them to deliver the educational standards our young people deserve.

This report sets out the remarkable achievements of our partnership to date. We are not complacent, however, and our resolve to keep providing the right infrastructure on time and in budget on behalf of local children, local taxpayers and the community at large is as strong as ever.

We believe strongly that our partnership with Scape Group gives us the very best chance of doing so.

Thank you

Dave Hodgson

Mayor Dave Hodgson

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview of programme

Bedford Borough Council have worked extensively over the past five years to address the growing need for school places.

Located one hour north of London with excellent rail links and sitting at the heart of the commuter belt, Bedford is an attractive place that both professionals and families want to call home.

As a result, the **population has grown 7.9% from 157,479 in 2011 to 169,912 in 2017*** which has created an unprecedented demand for schools, housing and community facilities. On a national scale, the population for **England and Wales grew by 4.7%** during the same period (from 56,075,912 to 58,744,600).

Bedford Borough Council's school estate was littered with inadequate accommodation and 'temporary' school classrooms. Led by the Mayor of Bedford, Dave Hodgson, council officers and members were committed to addressing the situation to ensure that not only the right number of school places would be available, but more importantly, that each classroom was designed and delivered to the highest quality, facilitating a world-class education for Bedford's young people.

7.9%

population growth between 2011 to 2017



This report is a continuation of 2015's 'Celebrating Success' which showcased the outcomes of the partnership forged between Bedford Borough Council and Scape Group. Celebrating Success illustrated how working collaboratively enabled **savings of £35m** based on projected costs. This in turn also delivered the **35% cost saving** required by central government from any public body procuring construction works.

After five years of hard work with school education at the heart of the agenda, Bedford Borough Council can now celebrate an expansive school building programme that has ensured the borough's local schools can serve their communities through accessible, superior teaching and learning environments that inspire both pupils and staff. The collaborative approach has resulted in **343 new or refurbished classrooms**, accommodating **more than 9,200 pupils** and increasing the percentage of primary school pupils being allocated their **first-choice school from 92.3% in 2014 to 95.7% in 2018****.

343 **new or refurbished classrooms**

2012

number of school places created

2014

2016

2017

2019

▲ 9,242 school places



***Source:** Office of National Statistics and 2011 Census
****Source:** Department for Education, Statistics: School Applications

Bedford;
An attractive place to live

Children under 16 make up approximately 22% (37,140) of Bedford borough's population, highlighting the urgent need for school places across the borough*. In the last four years alone, the **total number of pupils has increased by 6% from 31,085 pupils in 2014 to 32,934 in January 2018****. This created a significantly higher level of demand when compared to the East of England, which saw a 5.3% increase in pupil numbers and England where there was an increase of 4.9%. These demographic shifts applied significant and immediate pressure on the local school system.

The Mayor of Bedford, supported by the education and children services teams at Bedford Borough Council, recognised that rapid action was required. Furthermore, due to the financial challenges of seeing their 'Building Schools for the Future' funding being withdrawn, an innovative and efficient solution needed to be found. This solution needed to enable quick expansion of their education estate to a standard that met the needs of the children in the community.

6% **increase in the total number of pupils between 2014 to 2018** (31,085 to 32,934)



***Source:** Bedford Borough 2017 Mid-Year Population Estimates
****Source:** Department for Education, Statistics: School Applications



A new era
for Bedford borough's schools

School education is at the heart of Bedford's community.

In 2015, Scape Group was appointed to undertake feasibility studies at 40 schools across the borough. Their design teams were tasked to determine each lower, middle and upper school's requirements to convert to either a primary or secondary school.

They not only evaluated how many new classrooms each school needed to accommodate the increase in pupil numbers, but also assessed the facilities available at each school to ensure that they were equipped to successfully deliver a primary or secondary curriculum. From this study, a full report on each school was provided, setting out their basic needs to meet the curriculum as well as detailing their aspirations for wider improvements.

As a result, Bedford Borough Council were able to develop a comprehensive programme to cover the works required and secure £36m of necessary funding.

As such a productive working relationship between Bedford Borough Council, Scape and the schools had been established, they were appointed as lead designers for the three-tier to two-tier conversion programme in 2016.

£36m
of funding secured



Scape Group | BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL





Since 2012 we've achieved a lot, but we've got big plans for the future.

Open out to review our timeline of progress

Project Timeline

2012–2019

A collaborative approach between Bedford Borough Council and Scape Group to create more than 9,200 school places across the borough.

This timeline shows every completed project, along with the number of classrooms and school places created since November 2012. We have pulled out a number of key project milestones along the journey.

The graph in the background illustrates the growth in pupil places and classroom delivery throughout the programme.

Key

Classrooms

Pupils



Kempston Rural Primary School

A school expansion in the form of a two form-entry Sunesis Keynes school, accommodating 420 pupils. This new school replaced a much smaller school located about a mile away.

14 classrooms | 420 school places

Over **3,000** new school places created



Bromham C of E Lower School

The first of two projects at Bromham saw a single-storey two-classroom extension, to accommodate 60 pupils. You can read the second phase case study on page 30.

2 classrooms | 60 school places

Over **4,000** new school places created

Bedford feasibility study

Scape Group was appointed directly to undertake a programme-wide feasibility study and were retained to lead the design for each of the projects that arose.

The feasibility report enabled Bedford Borough Council to gain the right amount of funding for the projected £36m programme of works. The collaboration and continuity of involvement with Scape was essential for the council and stakeholders.



Wixams Academy

A cutting-edge 824 place science and technology academy with sixth form facilities, serving as the centrepiece of a new community. Read the case study on page 26.

40 classrooms | 824 school places

Over **6,000** new school places created



Riseley CofE Primary School

A single storey, eight-class building on a former middle school site has created spacious, modern classrooms with striking feature cladding in the school's own colours. To minimise disruption to the operating school, the new building was constructed during the evenings.

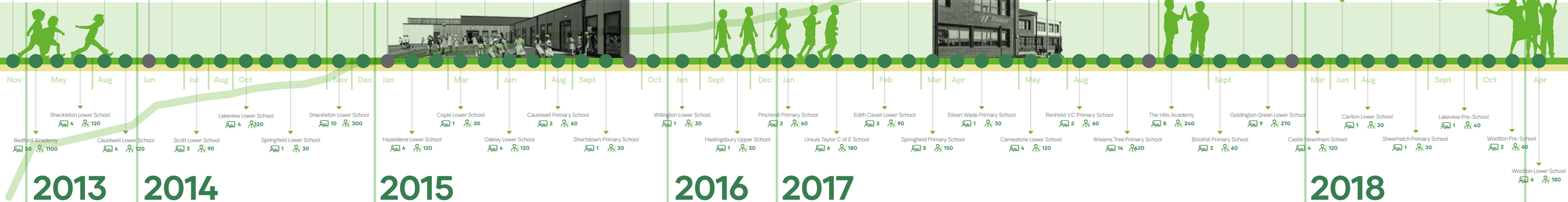
8 classrooms | 240 school places

Total number of new school places created:

9,242

Total number of new and refurbished classrooms:

343



Promoting local employment and skills. Supporting local business whilst protecting and improving our environment.



Local labour within 20 miles:
59%

Local spend within 20 miles:
46%

Client satisfaction
Provision of cost information
9.3/10

Waste diverted from landfill
99%

Client satisfaction
Whole life performance
8.9/10

Client satisfaction
Product
9.2/10



Small-Medium Enterprise (SME) engagement Contracting locally:
97%



Client satisfaction
Value for money
8.9/10

Client satisfaction
Service
9.4/10

"We are investing heavily to ensure all children are able to benefit from being taught in permanent accommodation which, supports local schools such as Bromham C of E Primary School to deliver high-quality teaching and learning. This project is a result of effective working between the school and the council, and I hope generations of local children will enjoy learning in this new building for many years to come."

Dave Hodgson
Mayor of Bedford



Milton Ernest
C of E Primary School

Number of new classrooms:

1

Number of pupil places created:

24

Construction programme:

8 weeks

Framework:

Minor Works

Framework delivery partner:

KIER

Requirement:

Milton Ernest is a half-form entry village school and has a published admission number of 12 pupils per year group. The school moved from a lower school to a primary school by retaining year five and six pupils, taking the total school pupil numbers to 84.

Solution:

The school was already utilising all of its existing space, so a single-storey, one-classroom building to accommodate years five and six was constructed to provide sufficient space for the additional 24 pupils.

Given the location of the school (adjacent to the A6), the offsite, modular classroom provided a perfect solution to avoid unnecessary disruption to the surrounding road infrastructure. Utilising Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) enabled the programme to be delivered within eight weeks, as classroom modules were delivered in one morning, being carefully craned over the boundary wall of the school before being secured.

The modular classroom block lies on the edge of the small school site, so extensive natural lighting and ventilation, with full height windows and level access throughout, provides a light and airy learning space. The accessible classroom features breakout areas for the pupils to engage in group activities, which is also used for staff team meetings.

Milton Ernest C of E Primary School was delivered via the Scape National Minor Works framework by Kier.









"The opening of a new classroom for year five and six marks an important milestone in the history of our school. It is a real privilege to be able to build upon the strong foundations children of all abilities have built in our care. The new learning space will enable us to capitalise on what a small school like ours does best: a personalised education that prepares children effectively for the joy of learning which is so important for the next phase of their education. I firmly believe that the growth and confidence we will see in children's learning will result from expending effort in the right places."

Lisa Virnuls
Head Teacher

Ursula Taylor
C of E Primary School

Number of new classrooms:
6

Number of pupil places created:
120

Construction programme:
20 weeks

Framework:
Major Works

Framework delivery partner:
WILLMOTT DIXON
SINCE 1852

Requirement:

Ursula Taylor, formerly a lower school, moved to become a two-form entry primary school which could accommodate up to 420 pupils, increasing the school's population by 120 pupils. As with many of the borough's schools, two temporary classrooms also needed replacing with permanent structures.

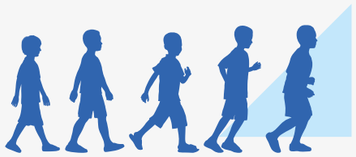
Solution:

The combination of two building requirements (demolition and construction) meant that the school benefitted from offsite, modular construction which delivered a fast solution - reducing disruption to the live school site. The two temporary classrooms were demolished, with the area then restored to a sports pitch, and a two-storey six-classroom modular building was constructed.

The new classroom block benefits from a large corridor with spacious breakout areas on both the ground and first floors, which are ideal for group working, and the first-floor landing is utilised as a library and quiet reading zone. The outside finish of timbered cladding is sympathetic to the surrounding buildings and environment, creating an appealing school which complements the nearby listed buildings.

Ursula Taylor C of E Primary School was delivered via the Scape National Major Works framework by Willmott Dixon.

120
additional school places created







"We are delighted with our new classrooms, they are bright, airy and provide the extra space we desperately needed. The children have large open breakout spaces and have utilised the upstairs landing as a fantastic library and quiet reading area.

As the building was being constructed, some old coins were found onsite which our pupils got really excited about, they also thoroughly enjoyed watching the building modules being lifted into place. Seeing the progress made each week encouraged them to ask questions, get involved and engage with the future of the school. The process of using offsite construction helped reduce disruption to the school's day and offered a great building in a short space of time."

Victoria Morrall
Head Teacher

Wixams Academy

Number of new classrooms:
40

Number of pupil places created:
824

Construction programme:
48 weeks

Framework:
Major Works

Framework delivery partner:
WILLMOTT DIXON
SINCE 1852

Requirement:

A new secondary school and sixth form to serve as the centrepiece of a new community. Crucially, the project had to meet stringent Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) compliance measures to secure project funding. Few new school builds achieve this, so it was a major milestone and allowed this national flagship project to go ahead.

Solution:

With a clear vision for the academy to be a centre of excellence for science and technology, the design focused around modern facilities that would enable the school to achieve this, including; specialist science laboratories, computing labs, high-tech workshop with 3D lathes, a creative design studio and a music room along with a recording studio.

A large, open-plan, learning resource centre sits at the heart of the school; a shared space designed for teamwork, studying and group activities and the entire second floor is devoted to the sixth form. Outside, extensive sports facilities and an outdoor piazza, linking walkways together, create safe and open spaces for the pupils.

Wixams Academy was delivered via the Scape National Major Works framework by Willmott Dixon.

The 824-pupil place academy offers 100 secondary school places per year, as well as a large 324-strong sixth form.

- The school was delivered to the Facilities Output Specification and within the compliance measures required by the ESFA
- The project was delivered within a short programme, on-time and on-budget
- Pupils benefit from a learning environment that encourages teamwork and offers professional study spaces
- The academy is located adjacent to Wixams Tree Primary School, another brand-new school which Bedford Borough Council completed with the support of Scape Group. Both schools were constructed at the same time and offer a combined total of 1,200 school places to the new Wixams community and surrounding area.

824
pupil place academy

100
secondary places per year

324
sixth form places





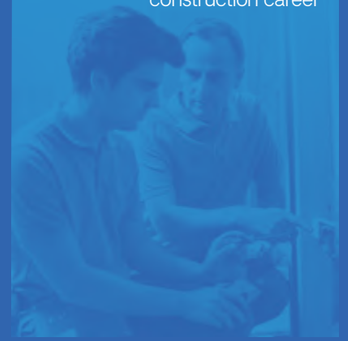




Delivering social value:

As well as creating an outstanding centre for excellence, the project also generated significant community benefits, including:

233
apprenticeship weeks, helping young adults to take the next step in their construction career



640
people attended short courses, helping to upskill the local community

Skill

404
students from local schools and colleges attended workshops to learn more about the construction industry

98%
of spend was with local SMEs, supporting the borough's local businesses



100%
of waste was diverted from landfill

194
students from local schools, colleges and universities visited the site to gain hands-on experience



"We have a beautiful building and a lot of pride in it from all quarters. The students love it, the staff feel very lucky to have it, and the parents love it too. The collaboration made the Academy a massive success; the quality is beautiful."

Paul Spyropoulos
Principal

Bromham
C of E Primary School

Number of new and refurbished classrooms:
11

Number of pupil places created:
330

Construction programme:
24 weeks

Framework:
Minor Works

Framework delivery partner:
KIER

Requirement:

Bromham, previously a lower school, turned into a primary school by retaining years five and six and increased its annual intake from 60 to 90 pupils. Bromham needed to offer an additional 330 places overall; more than doubling the school's capacity and resulting in the need for additional classrooms and improved facilities.

Solution:

The school's existing, undersized hall and kitchen were converted into classrooms and a larger hall and kitchen were constructed, as well as seven spacious new classrooms. The design includes a flexible central learning street with breakout areas suitable for group and solo working, and a new courtyard play area.

The seven classrooms were built utilising offsite, modular technology, which reduced the timescale of the programme to just 24 weeks and minimised disruption to the live school site. By 2024, the school will have capacity for 630 pupils between the ages of four and eleven.

Bromham C of E Primary School was delivered via the Scape National Minor Works framework by Kier.

630
pupil places by 2024









"We are extremely pleased with our new classrooms, hall and kitchen. We were involved in the design process from the beginning and felt the whole experience was very consultative; our views and ideas were taken on board. Construction was remarkably swift and because of the modular nature of the build, it caused very little disruption to the school as a whole – and children and parents were excited to be able to watch the progress of the new building as it took shape before their eyes. And the end result - a block that came together just as we'd hoped and imagined - a block that's universally admired by children, parents and visitors - a block that feels airy, light and spacious and is a joy to work in."

Virginia Gilks
Head Teacher

Oakley Primary Academy

Number of new classrooms:

3

Number of pupil places created:

90

Construction programme:

16 weeks

Framework:

Minor Works

Framework delivery partner:

KIER

Requirement:

Oakley Lower School moved to become a full one and a half-form entry primary school by accommodating an extra 90 pupils and expanding its teaching provision. With an additional six teaching staff, an extensive feasibility study was conducted to review the existing facilities and determine what accommodation was required.

A modular four-classroom block was previously built on the school site, as part of phase one of the three-tier to two-tier programme and due to the tight timescales, another modular solution was proposed.

Solution:

A single-storey three-classroom extension to comfortably accommodate the pupils was carefully designed to include external full height windows on the north and west of the building, providing a view to the outside and affording good levels of daylight in both the summer and winter months.

Designed with level access and wide doors throughout, there is ample breakout space for group learning, one-to-one additional support and parent reading activities. The original car park was reconfigured to provide more spaces for ease of access, and a new cycle parking and a storage facility was built.

Oakley Primary Academy was delivered via the Scape National Minor Works framework by Kier.

90
additional school places created







"The turnaround of our new classrooms was really quick, it went up during the summer term and the children moved in for the start of the new term in September. The pupils and staff were all very excited about getting settled in and using the new building and facilities. Being spacious with lots of natural light, the classrooms are a great environment for the children to learn in and the remote control sky-lights are one of the staff's favourite features.

The large breakout area is a useful and welcome addition for the school, as we can have small groups work and break out from the main teaching areas."

Sarah Litchfield
Academy Principal

Castle Newnham School

Number of new classrooms:
4

Number of pupil places created:
120

Construction programme:
40 weeks

Framework:
Minor Works

Framework delivery partner:
KIER

Requirement:

Newnham Middle School, an existing middle school, amalgamated with nearby Castle Lower School so that together they could provide a primary and secondary curriculum. The site needed to convert to a secondary school as well as absorb years five and six from Castle Lower School, which was already at capacity, therefore additional space was needed to accommodate all pupils.

Solution:

Converting from a middle school to a secondary school meant that the site needed to be reconfigured and expanded to accommodate the increase in pupil numbers. Scape Group applied their extensive knowledge of what components a secondary school should incorporate, mapping this against the available budget, to intelligently configure the elements required. This is where pre-designed, modular solutions were perfect. Knowing the cost of each element allowed the team to be creative within budget, without compromising on quality.

Through collaboration and clever design, Castle Newnham School is now an all-through school that is located across two sites. An existing annexe was refurbished to house years five and six, allowing for a direct feed into the secondary school, and the existing sports hall, gym and surrounding rooms were renovated. In addition, four new state-of-the-art classrooms, science labs and a Sport England-compliant sports hall (which is also utilised by local sports clubs), were built utilising offsite, modular construction. This approach not only encouraged pupils to learn more about the construction of the school and the industry as a whole, but also kept disruption to a minimum, despite the scale of works carried out.

Castle Newnham School was delivered via the Scape National Minor Works framework by Kier.



The school also benefited from a donation of surplus materials from the Kier Eastern project team working onsite, allowing pupils to engage in outdoor learning by building their own 100% recycled outdoor classroom.









"Our pupils and staff are delighted with the transformation of our site following our building and refurbishment project over the last two years. Our sports hall is in daily use by the school as well as local sports clubs and is a major addition to the site. Despite a huge amount of work going on, the approach adopted meant that disruption during the works was at an absolute minimum. A great success!"

Ruth Wilkes,
Federation Principal

The future of Bedford's schools

Bedford Borough's schools are now well-equipped with safe, accessible and fit-for-purpose buildings to deliver an inclusive education for all children, whilst meeting growing demand.

Through this significant investment, as well as improvements in local infrastructure, regeneration and housing as set out in the Bedford Growth Plan, the region has positioned itself as a more desirable and attractive borough for the growing population.

The Bedford borough schools programme has evolved significantly since 2011. The lessons learned have helped to shape an innovative, new approach to tackling their school places challenge which has also delivered significant value for money, unique designs, flexibility, time-efficiency and most importantly, inspirational learning environments for the children to thrive within.



A place for every child teacher parent community **one**



Wixams Tree Primary 420 primary school places

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL Scape Group

Through this programme we have enabled a positive change for the whole of Bedford which demonstrates the fantastic outcomes that can be achieved through true collaboration.

Bedford Borough Council are now able to provide current and future residents with the certainty of an outstanding education for their children.

This report was produced by Scape Group in partnership with Bedford Borough Council. Scape Group is a public-sector organisation, dedicated to creating ongoing efficiency and social value through the built environment. Scape and its subsidiaries offer fully managed frameworks, property services, innovative design solutions, community investment opportunities and joint ventures.