

Barnfield West is a new build, 8-form entry Academy for 1450 pupils aged 11-18. Located in Lewsey Farm, a suburb west of Luton town centre, the new Academy replaces the existing school building on the same site. Originally appointed by Luton Borough Council and novated to Wates Construction, our design was borne out of extensive consultation with both client and the wider school community.

Catering for young people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, the new building was required to engender a sense of pride and ownership, in order to help change the formerly negative image of the school. The brief also specified the incorporation of extended service provision, such as the integrated youth centre, to encourage a positive and more active relationship with its local community.

The Academy has developed a successful reputation based on a strong symbiosis of pastoral and learning structures, with its five-house system and cross-year tutor groups of around 20 students. The identity of these houses have influenced the building form and layout in five wings. The design also celebrates the Academy's specialisms in the Cultural and Creative Industries, Business and Enterprise and

ICT, allowing them to become embedded into all aspects of the curriculum. Each of the houses has a business and enterprise space which are flexible, multi-purpose spaces at the base of a three-storey void, with general learning areas above.

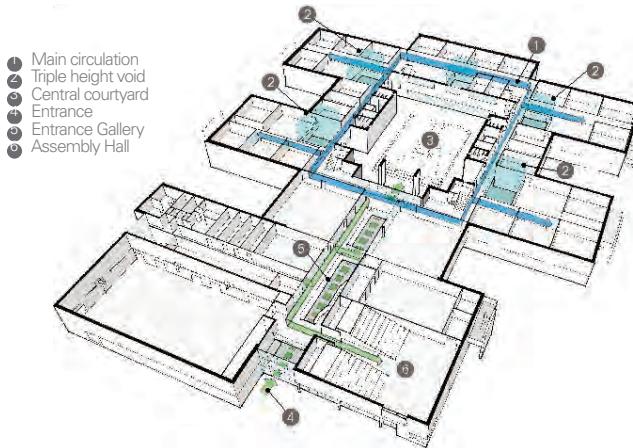
A fully glazed, double height entrance atrium provides welcoming views into the heart of the school, and showcases the specialisms. This transparent and welcoming single entrance is provided for all users, accessed through a landscaped entrance court, and clearly visible from the street. The dining space is at the heart of the Academy, reflecting its 'healthy minds, healthy bodies' ethos. Designed to be available for community use, it also provides a social area during school performances and events.

An extensive programme of end user engagement was carried out, with regular project progress meetings, as well as focussed consultation, and a scheduled Inset Day used to engage the whole staff team, including students as participants and presenters. A group of students also travelled to London to take part in ArchitecturePLB's 'Edible Café' event for the London Festival of Architecture - a workshop about improving school dining spaces.





02



Total Area : 12400sqm GIA
Procurement Type : Design and Build
Local Authority : Luton Borough Council



A series of events also took place aimed at drawing the local community into the design process, such as "Barnfield West Week" with a public exhibition held in the shopping centre, a "Special Assembly" for key local community representatives, parents, staff and students to learn about the project and see how their contributions had shaped the scheme. The week culminated in Barnfield West Academy's Wild West Fête where ArchitecturePLB put on cowboy hats and created games and prizes to attract as many as possible to learn about the exciting new future for the academy.

The Academy received additional funding from the DCSF for achieving a 60% reduction in CO₂ emissions from the Part L 2002 building regulations, for which it was concluded biomass would deliver the greatest benefit. The scheme achieved a BREEAM 'Very Good' rating and an 'A' rated EPC.



- 01 Entrance atrium
02 Circulation diagram
03 Community consultation
04 Exhibiting at Wild West Fête
05 Section sketch