

Press release

Deaf School and architect challenge mainstream education

The Architecture in Schools competition brief was to design a community hub over the 3 month period between September to December. The winners Oak Lodge school for the deaf not only produced the most significant and powerful design, but in doing so challenged mainstream education methods of teaching.

Students took part in the competition alongside 900 other pupils from different schools. Oak Lodge took this challenge a step further by engaging not only with the built environment but also with their local deaf club, discussing and challenging the direct implications of non deaf architects designing spaces for the deaf, enabling students to go beyond the classroom and directly connect with their community on real life issues.

"I have so enjoyed looking at your website of the Architecture project. It looks so exciting to have worked on from the initial concept, interviewing the users, discussing the needs and designing the different options to delivering a really fantastic usable space. Congratulations on winning the Overall Winner of the Architecture in Schools Awards 2011" - Councillor Kathy Tracey, Wandsworth Council

Pupils and teachers agree opportunities such as AIS are lacking greatly in the current structure of the education system, along with the diversity of learning methods this project brings to the classroom. Through Enrichment activity sessions, a scheme supported by the current coalition government, students are given greater choice to decide what they study. Oak Lodge, a school taking in pupils from 32 boroughs in London, were able through enrichment sessions to participate the AIS programme.

Oak Lodge students as an example, disregarded the standard form of worksheets used by many mainstream schools, and in turn creatively documented the process and their progression through virtual means of filming, ipad software and technology. Consequently the students created a significantly more documented report of the project, challenging the most overwhelmingly used method of main stream education, writing. Overall Architecture in Schools embedded real life experience learning outside the classroom, without these programmes students lack the vital skills to equip them for the real world of work.

*"From the start, it was clear this project had so many learning opportunities; communication, Deaf issues, educating Deaf children, urban development, sustainable architecture, community hubs, functional design, aesthetics, access for all, spatial awareness, creativity, Architectural principles ... the list goes on." - Darryl Bedford
Advanced Skills Teacher at Oak Lodge School*

Notes for Editor

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Video of Oak Lodge AIS project

http://www.projectict.com/CrossCuric/Projects/Entries/2011/11/20_Open_City_Architecture_Project.html

Architecture in Schools Secondary

Architecture in Schools is a unique programme for secondary schools to gain Direct experience of contemporary architecture, developing design skills and awareness of the built environment, together with creative workshops. Students, with a built environment professional, explore an exemplary building, unpack the design, then develop design ideas during a classroom workshop.

<http://www.open-city.org.uk/education/schools/secondary.html>

About Open-City

Open-City is an independent education organisation that champions the value of well-designed places and spaces in making a liveable and vibrant city, and the role everyone plays within it.

Open-City Education programmes offer a wide and constantly evolving programme of events, which open up the world of the built environment to its audiences. *Open-City Education's* approach is unique: its starting point is always direct experience. It takes education out of the classroom, off the library shelves, and into some of the finest examples of architecture the capital has to offer. As recognition for being leaders in the field of architecture education for young people, we are launching **My Green School**, a jam-packed resource on sustainability and design for primary school pupils and their teachers, and a nationwide competition for this age group to design an eco-school.