

wsa 'vertical studio' 2009 – OUTDOOR LEARNING

contacts: Keval Patel, Nicola James, Lee Griffiths

01. introduction

The approach to school design in the UK has changed dramatically over the last 5 years. Much can be attributed to the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme in England. The programme itself has evolved changing to educational needs, public perception and political will. Nevertheless, the objective has remained the same; to improve education and learning

02. project description

Outdoor learning has historically been more popular in primary schools, this has had political support in Wales with the implementation of the Foundation Phase in September 2008.

Education projects have many stakeholders that shape the design brief. One of the more common brief criteria is the buzz term '*transformational education*' which can be interoperated in numerous ways. A common response by design disciplines is to provide a variety of spaces and environments outside of the conventional classroom.

Outdoor learning is not a new initiative; Richard Neutra's Corona School in California extended the classroom outside in the 1930's making the inside appear almost a 'support space'. The Californian climate easily lent itself to this however designing for inside / outside learning in the UK is a different challenge. The full potential of outdoor learning has not yet been realised. This project aims to research into the 'simple' relationship of spaces, aspiring to challenge current models of education, through exploring the outdoor learning environment.

03. educational objectives

- Research the relationship of spaces with purpose
- Develop a brief with 'stakeholders'
- Gain an awareness of 'process' as well as 'end result'

04. student outcome

- Challenge perceptions of architectural space
- Gain an understanding of different educational methods
- Exposure to real clients, user groups and stakeholders
- Explore communication through diverse media methods
- Familiarity with practice environment

05. capita architecture outcome

- Test ideas for educational environments
- Share research with Clients & Educationalists (& DCfW)
- Support the practices' future education portfolio
- Encourage & develop young designers
- Promote / raise awareness of Capita Architecture, Cardiff work within WSA.
- Bring new experiences to the office and rekindle relationships between Percy Thomas and WSA



Richard Neutra's Corona School



Forest Learning



Capita Architecture's Big Wood School