

CASE STUDY | EDUCATION

SCOTT BROWNRIGG⁺

THREE RIVERS ACADEMY, SURREY



World
Architecture
Festival
2018
Finalist

OVERVIEW

Project name: Three Rivers Academy, Surrey

Address: Hersham Road, Walton-on-Thames KT12 5PY

Project value: £30m

Site size: 15,000 sq m/ 1,875 pupils

Completion date: February 2018

Client: Three Rivers Academy/The Howard Partnership Trust

Architect: Scott Brownrigg

Interior Designer: Scott Brownrigg

Structural Engineer: ARUP

Contractor: BAM



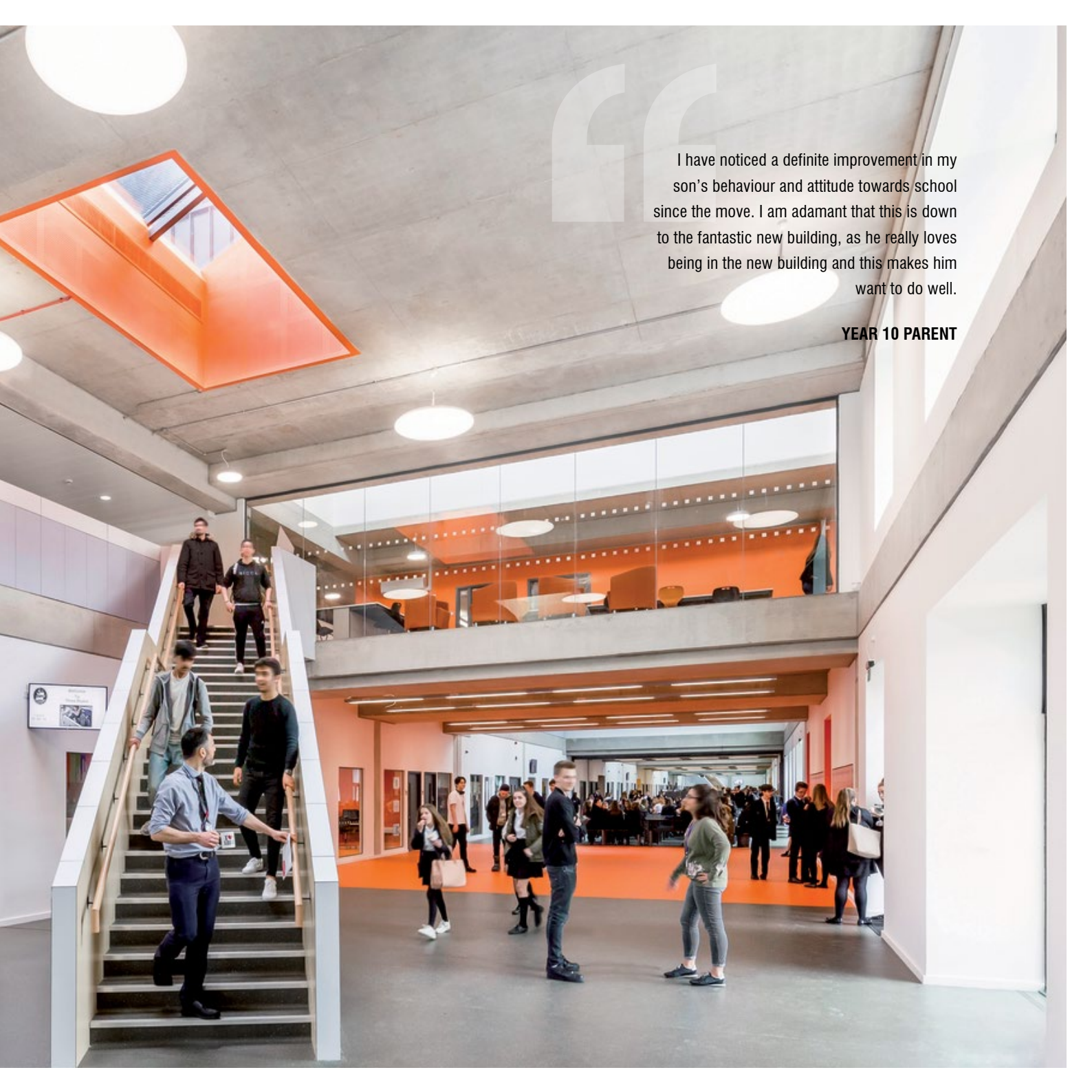


THREE RIVERS, SURREY

Three Rivers Academy replaces the former Rydens Enterprise School. The 1,875 pupil school and sixth form is a rare example of a new school procured outside the typical Government contractor-led UK model.

Commissioned by the Surrey based Multi-Academy Trust - The Howard Partnership Trust, the new school provides high quality, spacious facilities to inspire 21st Century learning. With a Vision to create a “world class learning environment for students”, the design provides a unified series of spaces all under a single roof.





I have noticed a definite improvement in my son's behaviour and attitude towards school since the move. I am adamant that this is down to the fantastic new building, as he really loves being in the new building and this makes him want to do well.

YEAR 10 PARENT

BRIEF AND CONCEPT DESIGN

The entrepreneurial approach allowed the brief and design to be developed directly with the end-user client, leading to a brand new centre for academia.

In the development of the brief, the school worked together with a specialist educationalist to generate a comprehensive and progressive Educational Design Brief which was then tested over a period of several months through extensive consultation with staff and pupils. Fundamental to this Vision was the intention for the new school to be all under one roof.

The unified series of spaces under a single roof conceptually form an almost creature-like arrangement, with a head (6th Form + Library), body (Specialist teaching spine and mall) and tail (Sports/Drama). The lateral (pedagogical Houses) spring from the body like four separate limbs.

The conceptual build-up of the limbs is akin to a stick of rock, the outer shell, or standing seam cladding acts as a protective sheath which, if sliced through anywhere along the limb would reveal the distinctive House colour within. Internally the wayfinding is intuitive and clear. The use of the distinct House colours is instantly recognisable through the use of graphics, furniture walls and flooring, allowing users to locate themselves throughout the building with ease.



At the far 'tail' end of the building are the Sports and Community facilities. This area is identified through the use of large format super-graphics to the walls of the Main Hall adjacent to the dedicated Community Entrance. The larger than standard 6 court Sports Hall which was stipulated in the original brief is another example of how the design has been maximised to benefit the school and the wider community. This large format space has a sprung timber floor and Cross Laminated Timber walls giving the illusion of a fully timber lined box.

When viewed from the railway or playing fields to the North, the schools' long dynamic form has a widescreen anamorphic quality. The overall silhouette is articulated by the Houses, or limbs, the form of which counterpoint the wide horizontal emphasis of the architecture and evoke the 4 Houses pedagogy of the school.

At the front of the school (head) the 6th form and Admin/Library blocks have been sculpted to both address the piazza and announce the main entrance.

The architectural differentiation of their form sets 'the head' apart from the rest of the building and provides the Sixth Formers with a sense of individual identity, which is important from a behavioural growth context.

The inviting angle and double height glass curtain walling further define the principle entry point for visitors. From the entrance piazza, users can catch a glimpse of the undulating double height spaces in the 'Mall' beyond the reception and waiting areas. The south facing side of the school is more intimate. The residential scale and proportion of the four houses takes precedence enclosing the south facing courtyards in-between. The mono-pitched roofs are a contemporary reference to the terraced housing along a residential street.



View from playing field and railway

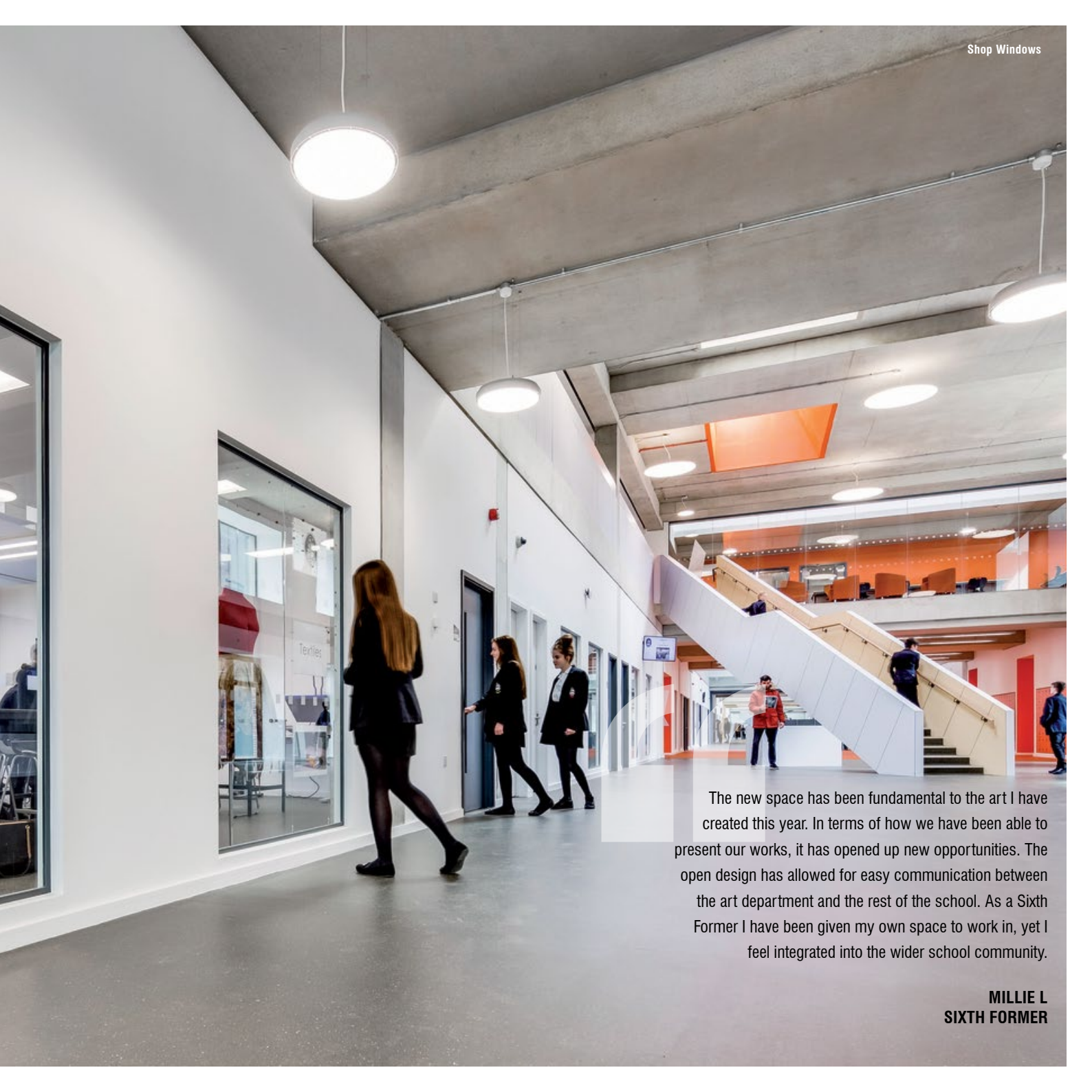
REVOLUTIONISING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The new school has revolutionised the way in which the Academy connects with its pupils. The variety of spaces now available to staff, students and the community facilitates many different ways of modern learning. The original brief to provide a facility 'all under one roof' has been successfully accomplished.

The multi-use space which flows 160m through the length of the building, undulating from single to double storey is at the heart of the improved student experience. Designed as the 'Mall' but now coined 'The Street' by the pupils, this space lends itself to a plethora of activities from Art exhibitions to Scientific paper-aeroplane competitions.

Running simultaneously alongside the Mall are the 'shop windows', where students are encouraged to showcase their talents by displaying their work to the rest of the School. This unique concept flips the traditional cellular, inwardly focused classroom format on its head and gives a presence usually reserved for breakout-spaces to the teaching spaces.





The new space has been fundamental to the art I have created this year. In terms of how we have been able to present our works, it has opened up new opportunities. The open design has allowed for easy communication between the art department and the rest of the school. As a Sixth Former I have been given my own space to work in, yet I feel integrated into the wider school community.

**MILLIE L
SIXTH FORMER**



The bright colours make it a really vibrant and exciting environment to learn in.
The flashes of colour are really well coordinated.

AMAL B / ADDIE P
YEAR 9 STUDENTS



I like that you can see in and out of the classrooms as there is a lot of glass. It makes it feel really open and looks much more interesting and inviting.

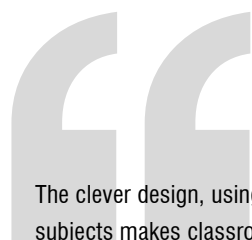
**DAVID S
STUDENT**

This transparency has led to an unexpected control-shift benefit, whereby the visibility of mischievous students is exposed to beyond that of solely the subject teacher inside the Classroom, allowing a greater sense of security and natural surveillance. In addition, the outwardly focused digital screens above major teaching spaces provide insights into academic life and up and coming events at the Academy. The openness of the school and the quality of the natural light has increased the overall ambience of the spaces, whilst the dedicated faculty colours has helped to provide an awareness of staff and pupils to understand their geographical placement in the wider building.

The vivid colours of the faculty blocks provide clear distinction between zones simplifying the navigation and way finding to an almost sub-conscious, intuitive level.

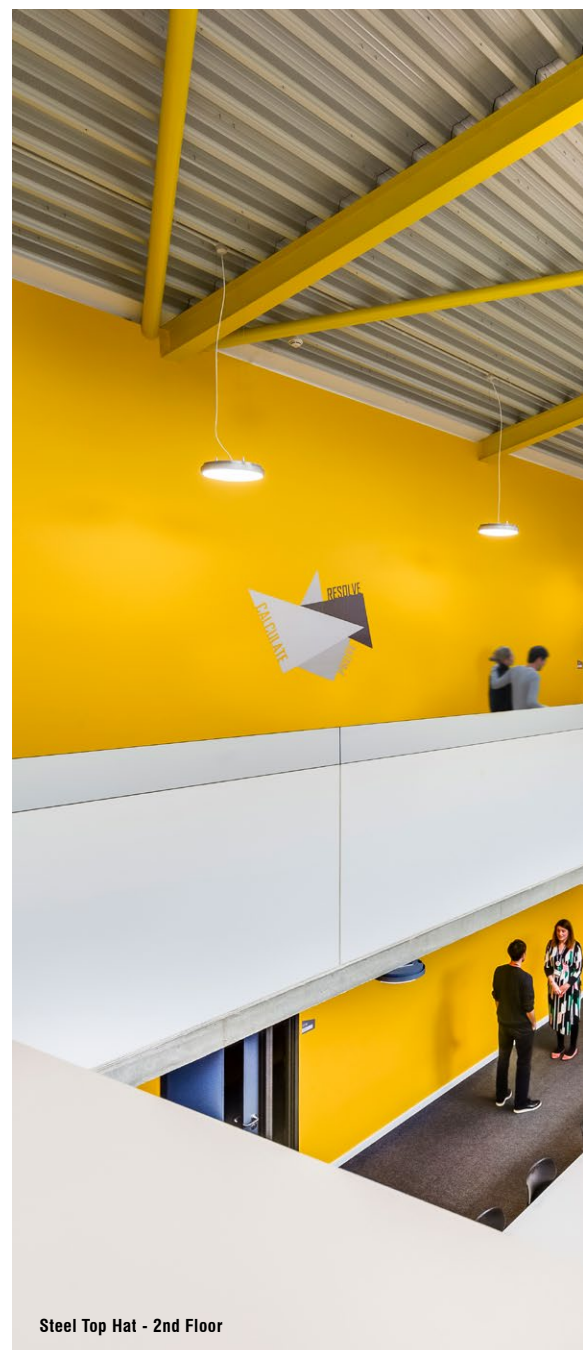
The non-corporate, graphical approach to the wayfinding has been widely applauded by the school and pupils. In each of the faculty areas, dedicated splashes of colour are set against the natural backdrop of exposed concrete to stand out and further highlight the zoning plan. In the areas between House blocks the colour strategy is muted thus allowing vibrant accents of subject colour to present themselves in the distance.

A geometric signage design was purposefully crafted in-house and is derived from the plan and section forms of the building. After a rationalisation process, these extracted forms were distilled to their essence and the resultant simplicity of the graphical signage makes for a clean identifiable signage strategy, implemented across the entire site.

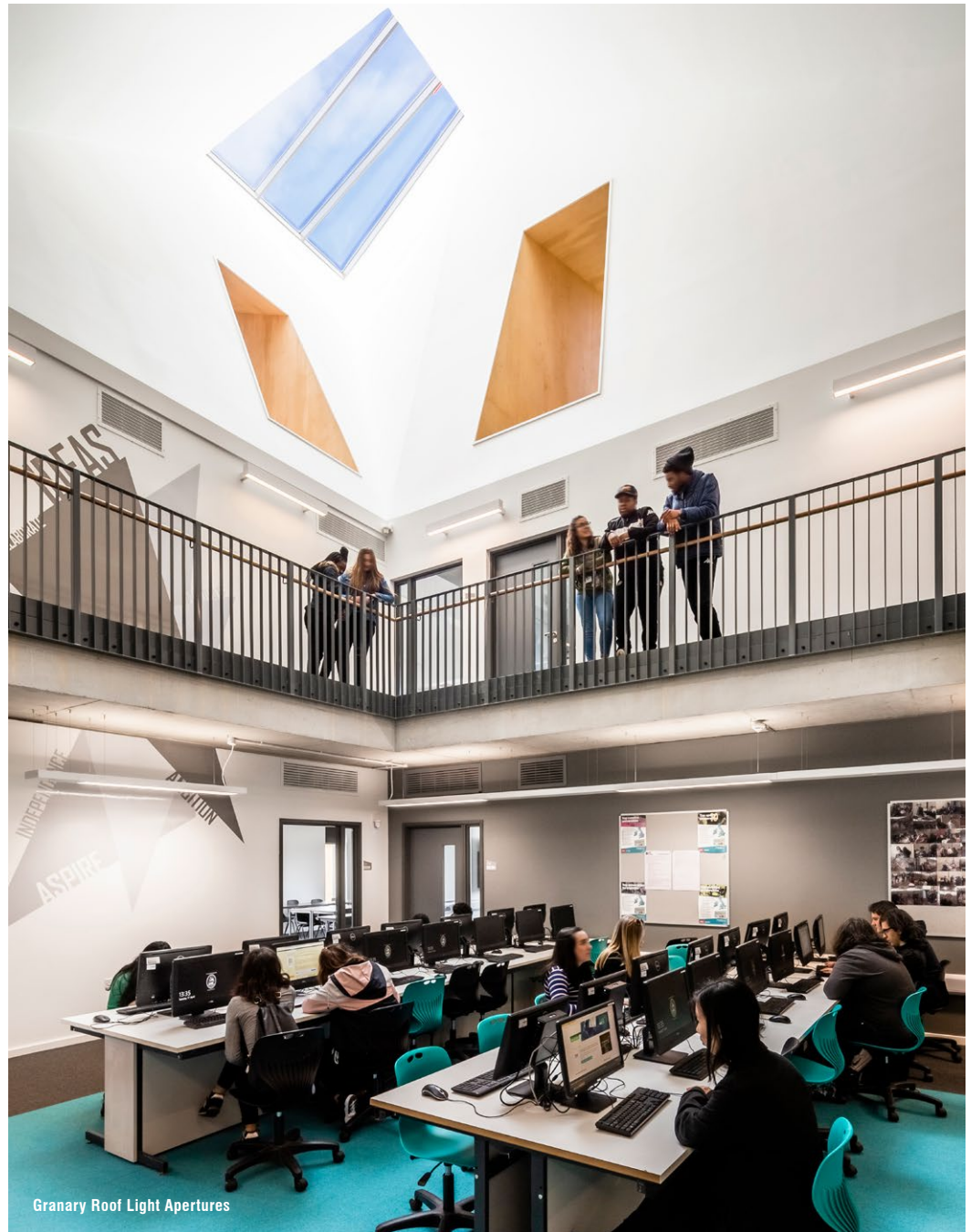


The clever design, using different colours for different subjects makes classrooms easy to find and the bright colours give it a modern feel.

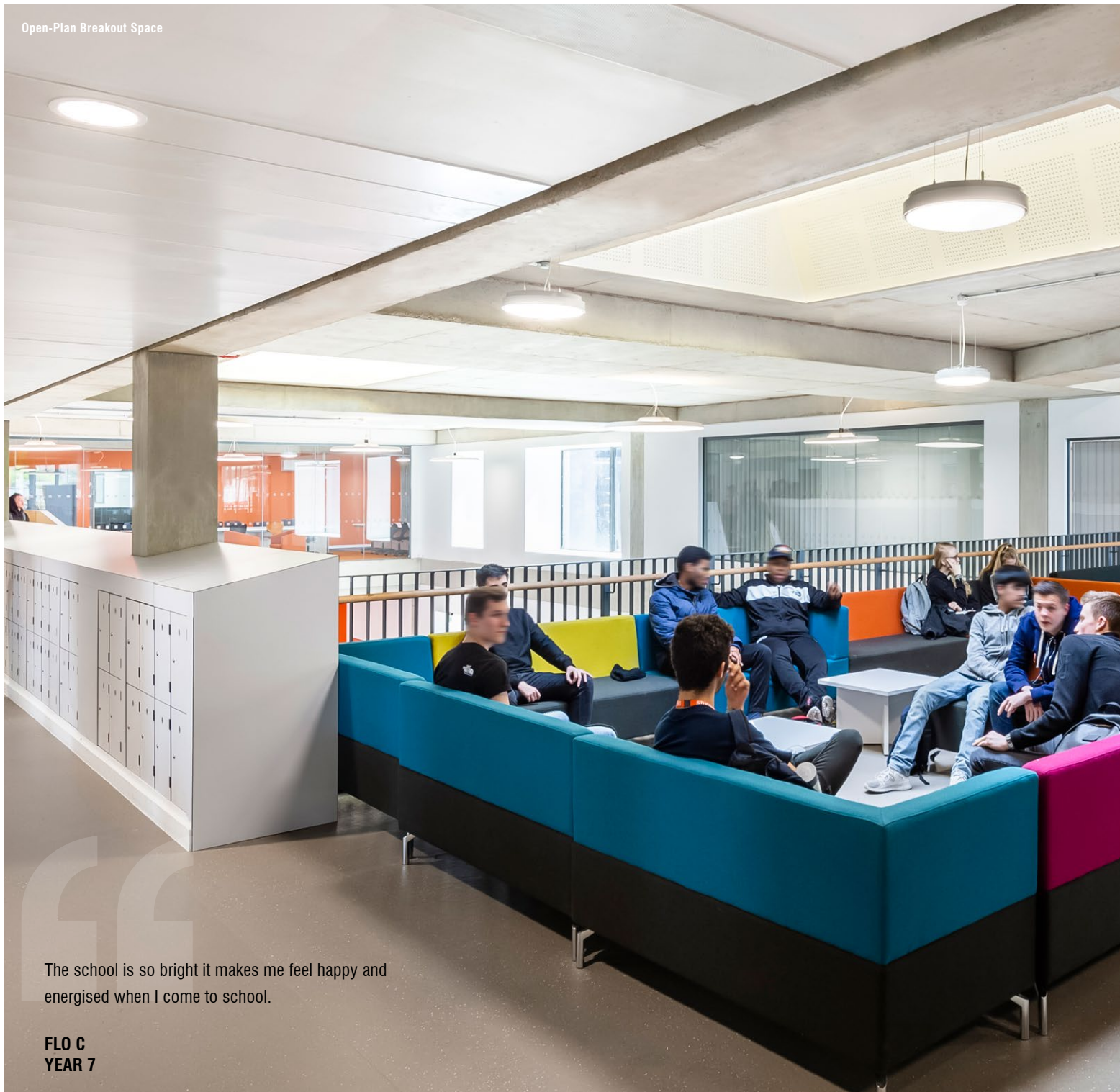
**LILY B
STUDENT**



Steel Top Hat - 2nd Floor



Granary Roof Light Apertures



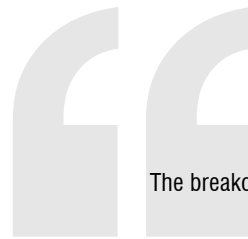
The school is so bright it makes me feel happy and energised when I come to school.

FLO C
YEAR 7



Across the interlinked floors at Level 1, the open-plan breakout spaces in each of the faculty blocks encourages chance meetings which in-turn facilitates shared learning and teaching experiences, and cross-faculty knowledge transfer. Their unique colour helps to establish the predominant subject of the area.

Designed to promote creativity, independent thinking and learning – breaking away from the traditional ‘receiver of knowledge’ mentality.



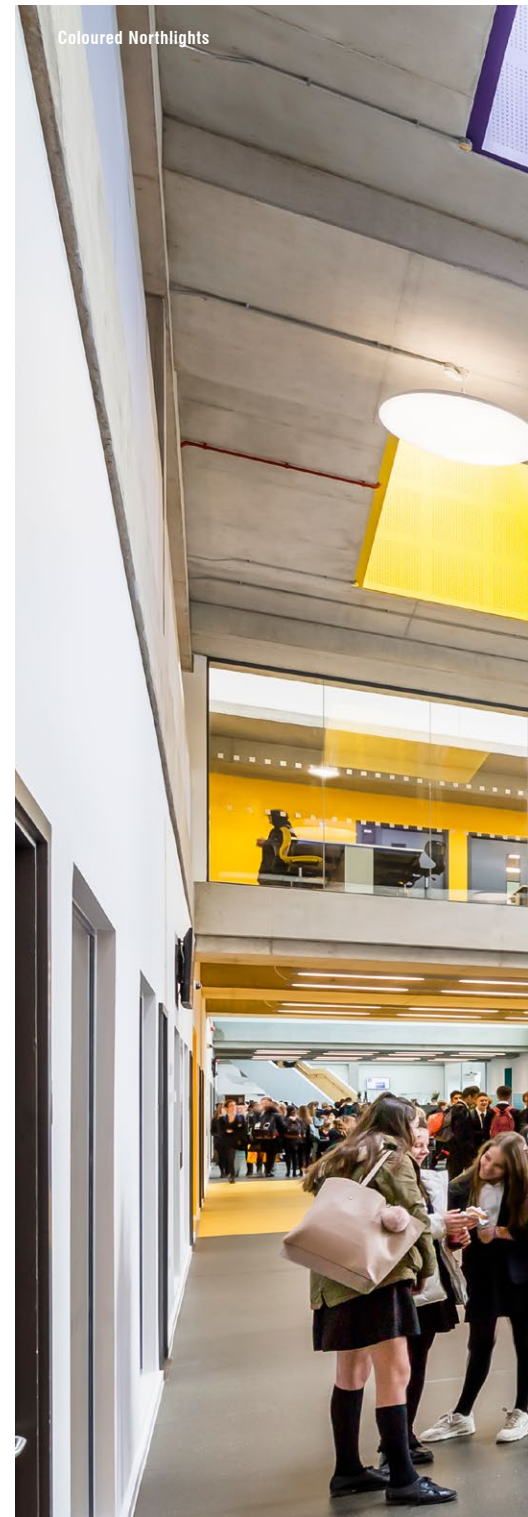
The breakout spaces are a great space for revision and allow us to learn together effectively.

**KATIE B
STUDENT**

SENSE OF ARRIVAL

Flanked by residential development, the new Academy building will breathe life into the new community and previously run-down, unoccupied school site.

Overall the new Academy has captured the interest and imagination of the students, staff and the local community. It is already helping to define and reinforce the successes of the Trust, and goes some way to increasing their reputation in the Academia world.





“

I really like the large open spaces for lunch and break, as they are great places to socialise. It's so easy to find my way round as we really only have one corridor, full of amazing colour!

**PHOEBE C
STUDENT**

“The sports facilities are overwhelming compared to the poor-quality ones in the old school. This gives us far more opportunities to take part in a wide range of sports.

ALEX B
STUDENT



Sports Hall



Coloured Reveals for Solar Shading

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