

Wessex Autistic Society, Portfield School, Dorset

Hydrotherapy Pool

A hydrotherapy pool in the grounds at Portfield School provides essential therapeutic benefits for pupils and the wider community.

The Client

Portfield School, the first school in the UK purpose-built for children with autism, saw hydrotherapy as an essential part of the educational and therapeutic facilities available to pupils. An appeal was launched to fund an extension to accommodate such a pool in the school grounds. After receiving substantial support, Wessex Autistic Society was able to start planning its new facility by the beginning of 2007. Officials visited several Plus Design and Build (PDB) projects which convinced them to place the order.

The Specification

PDB's architects were able to minimise any planning risks by designing a linked building which replicated many of the main school's features in terms of style, height, roof pitch, materials etc. As a result, consent was obtained and the development progressed smoothly.

The new facility is constructed in timber frame with glulam laminated beams and trusses, giving a vaulted roof style in the pool area. It is faced externally with red brick and has a 30 degree pitched roof finished with natural slate tiles. It incorporates a covered corridor linked to the main school, reception area, 12m x 6m hydrotherapy pool with hoist,

sensory bubble pool, viewing area and changing facilities. A soft play room, store rooms and plant room complete the ground floor. There is also a substantial first floor, overlooking the pool below, to be used as a meeting / conference room. This floor is accessed by a staircase complete with chair lift.

The insulated pool is two tiered with wide steps and handrails for easy entry and finished in bright multi-coloured mosaic tiles. It operates at 33°C – very warm water being essential for hydrotherapy treatment. The bacteria levels in the pool are controlled by an ultra-violet treatment system and climate control equipment maintains a constant air temperature of 34°C.

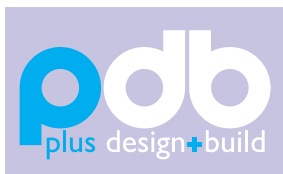




Client Benefits

Said Kevin Medcraft, Wessex Autistic Society's Facilities & Procurement Manager: "We are delighted with the new pool which is also available for use out of school hours by children with autism and their families, many of whom do not take their children swimming because of the stresses associated with the experience. This facility therefore also offers a rare opportunity for family-wide leisure activity away from home."

Client: The Wessex Autistic Society
 Location: Portfield School, Christchurch, Dorset



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