

News

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Ivor Goodsite celebrates Six Bells Primary School opening

Children starting the new term at the 360-capacity Six Bells Primary School were treated to an engaging visit from construction industry mascot, Ivor Goodsite who reinforced the importance of safety around building sites and having respect for the new facilities, and fellow pupils.

Commissioned as part of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme, the 26,500 sq ft two-storey school has been completed on time and to budget.

The design is targeting a BREEAM excellent sustainability rating. There are 15 classrooms and additional learning needs provision – comprising a quiet room, sensory room and sky ceiling.

Pupils will also benefit from teaching streets; informal co-learning spaces in the communal areas and corridors, designed to encourage collaboration, breakout sessions and small group activities outside of the normal classroom environment.

A new multipurpose hall is equipped with a full PA system, projector and screen and a stage with theatre lighting which can be used for activities ranging from breakfast clubs to drama productions.

There are also several secure outdoor play areas, an orchard, a multi-use games area (MUGA) and fully landscaped surroundings, including a mini-beast insect hotel. Pupils are also able to access an existing nature area, a short walk from the school, which features a trail up to the nearby Guardian sculpture; a historically-significant 66 foot tall statue, which overlooks the area and commemorates the heritage of the Six Bells Community.

A comprehensive programme of community engagement has been carried out alongside the build process.

The project has allowed one previously long-term unemployed local man to develop skills as a site gateman; undertaking traffic marshal and asbestos awareness training in the process.

Building work has also supported three-month placements for trainees from Y Prentis, the shared construction apprenticeship scheme operating across South East Wales, funded by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB).

Pupils from neighbouring schools and colleges have been treated to a series of site tours and presentations on the variety of careers available in the construction industry.

In addition, the Morgan Sindall Construction site team has also cleared a large area of debris and overgrown vegetation outside of the site boundary. The work has enabled better access to, and visibility of, the Guardian sculpture.

Robert Williams, area director for Morgan Sindall Construction, said: "We're incredibly pleased to hand over this latest school as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme. It's particularly gratifying to tie it in with such an engaging visit from Ivor Goodsite.

"All of the children were suitably enthused by his appearance, which built on a commendable programme of community engagement delivered by the site team throughout the construction process.

“We were particularly happy to be able to facilitate access to the Guardian statue. It’s an incredibly important heritage asset and right that pupils and the wider local community have access to it.”

Councillor Joanne Collins, executive member for education at Blaenau Gwent Council, said: “It is fantastic to know that the children are enjoying their new school and we are delighted to have been able to make this happen by working in partnership with the Welsh Government through the 21st Century Schools Programme and Morgan Sindall Construction. Our children and young people deserve the very best modern environments for their learning journeys and staff and pupils are delighted with their new facilities.

“It’s great that Morgan Sindall Construction has engaged well with the local community along the way and offered apprenticeships and training as part of the project to help local people develop new skills.”

For more information about this news release please contact Helena Young or Jonathan Daly at Influential on 0161 804 1400 or email young@thisisinfluential.com