

News

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Special handover ceremony marks new start for school devastated by fire

Morgan Sindall plc has celebrated the completion of work to rebuild John Ray Infant and Junior School with a special handover ceremony.

The company has now completed work on the project to rebuild the school after the original building was destroyed by a fire in 2013.

The £5.8 million project for Essex County Council saw Morgan Sindall construct a new school with 12 spacious classrooms, a library, an assembly hall with adjoining kitchen, a smaller hall, and an ICT room. The project also included an extension to the existing junior school, which has increased its capacity by 30 pupils per year group.

The scheme was particularly close to the project team's hearts, as Morgan Sindall project manager Daniel Morrish's son is a pupil at the school, while one of the Morgan Sindall apprentices on the scheme is a former pupil.

Daniel Morrish said: "It was lovely to work on a project that will directly benefit the local community as well as my own children. One of my sons is already a pupil at the school, and my youngest child is also due to start there - which meant this project was something of a family affair! Managing a project that will actually be used by my family has made for very rewarding work and we're all very pleased with the finished school."

Headteacher at John Ray, Sandra Way, said: "Morgan Sindall's excellent work rebuilding the school meant that we have a fabulous building to replace our old school which was destroyed by fire. The school means a lot, not only to our children and families, but also to our local community, and we are all thrilled to move into such a super environment.

"The Morgan Sindall team has been fantastic throughout the building process. They have involved the children at every stage and made this a fun and educational experience. The handover event was great fun and we're very grateful to the team for going over and above to make our handover special."

The handover of the new school was celebrated with an exciting event, a funfair for pupils and staff. The funfair included bouncy castles, an ice cream van, a bungee run and a fire engine from the local depot that assisted with tackling the original blaze back in 2013.

Gavin Napper, area director at Morgan Sindall, said: "The school is an integral part of the local community, a fact which is exemplified by the close connections that members of our own project team have with the school.

"We're delighted to have played a part in bringing John Ray School back to life and are pleased and proud to have delivered this great new building, which will give local children a permanent, fit-for-purpose school and replace the temporary facilities they were using. The additional school places created through the expansion will also provide a great resource for the rapidly-growing local community."

The Morgan Sindall project team has also recently completed a £5.1 million project to construct a

new business unit and visitor centre known as 'The Hub', at the site of the Hadleigh Olympic Legacy mountain biking course. The project for Essex County Council involved the construction of three new buildings and associated landscaping work.

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