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# St. Francis Primary School

VELUX Modular Skylights created a bright and inspiring learning environment

*Bringing light to life™*



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VELUX Modular Skylights

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Modular Skylights

St. Francis

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Ventnor, Isle of Wight

## From old school to modern education

The sky is the limit at the new primary school in Ventnor on the Isle of Wight

The old school wasn't the best environment for the young pupils at St. Francis Primary. Constructed in the 1950s the buildings were originally designed for secondary students with the windows positioned for taller students so it was difficult for the younger pupils to enjoy the beautiful outside landscape.

In 2010 the local authority approved plans to build a new school, and after three years of planning and construction the doors opened in February 2013. The new school includes 33 longlights of VELUX Modular Skylights. Head Teacher Angela Hewkin is enthusiastic remarking that the new interior represents a leap into the future: "We now have a truly 21st century feel to the school."

A new beginning  
new beginning





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## Project phases, participants and materials

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### The Planning Phase

- Planning began in March 2010.
- The installation started in June 2012, and was completed during the rest of June and July.

### The participants

- The construction group included HNW Architects, Willmott Dixon as main contractor, Southern Industrial Roofing as sub contractor/installer with assistance from VELUX technicians.
- BJ Smith of Willmott Dixon led the building project.
- Guy Rutherford of Southern Industrial Roofing led the skylight installation.

### The product solution

- 34 modular skylights of 675 mm x 1200 mm.
- 48 modular skylights of 800 mm x 1200 mm.
- 82 in total - of which 41 are venting.
- All modules have integrated blinds.
- 9° roof pitch.

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## A real transformation

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### The difference is in the light-filled airy surroundings

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60 years is a long time in educational thinking, and the new buildings in Newport Road couldn't be more different from the old school. Head Teacher Angela Hewkin has been involved in the design process from the start, and she is delighted by the results.

"The main difference is the light and spaciousness within. The old buildings were darker and less welcoming. We really appreciate the light-filled airy surroundings and now it's an air-conditioned environment, which works brilliantly whatever the weather. It cools down when it's hot and remains warm when it's cold outside."

The staff members really like the new interior, and the Head Teacher has even noticed a change in the

way the teachers dress for work. Now that the interior climate will remain pleasant regardless of the outside temperature, the choice of working wardrobe has become much easier all the year round. Looking back, however, Angela also remembers the scepticism from the local community in the early stages of planning. A community open day held in February helped to reshape opinion.

"Everyone was impressed with the facilities, inspiring atmosphere and the space, light and colour. It certainly created a 'wow it's awesome' factor! We had a wonderful range of positive comments from parents in our visitors' book. Somebody even wrote; 'A real transformation, we want to come back to school please!'"



Angela Hewkin, Head Teacher (left) at the St. Francis Primary School was involved in the project with Jade Kennett, Principal Officer from the Local Authority planning department on the Isle of Wight, throughout the process. Both are very pleased with the new school's day-lit interior.

“ Our new light-filled and climate-controlled building will have a lasting effect on all those who share in our wonderful new school

Angela Hewkin,  
Head Teacher





## Between light and shade

Focused areas of daylight create an inspiring learning environment

Activity levels are known to increase in areas where the dynamic quality of daylight is preserved. The new buildings in Ventnor are designed with small, well-placed long-lights, each containing two or three modules that capture the sun's daily pattern and produces focused areas of daylight for creative activity.

“ Our energy bill has also improved, which makes our business manager very happy

Angela Hewkin,  
Angela Hewkin,  
Head Teacher.

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Daylight and  
Daylight and  
fresh air





## The reason why ideas are called bright

Daylight and fresh air are nutrients for the learning process

Research shows that a child's ability to gather and process knowledge vastly improves, when they are taught in a bright and ventilated environment. Since the opening Angela Hewkin has made her own observations, which agrees with this research.

"It's a good learning environment and the children appreciate the light space and the climate controlled effect, whatever the weather – hot or cold. We now have a growing changing school, and I am impressed with the learning outcomes. Children do seem to be

more alert in the classrooms towards the end of the day, especially when we have hot summer weather. The air seems a lot clearer."

Angela also noticed that the absenteeism rate seems to be better with fewer pupils absent due to sickness. "Attendance has improved since the new building opened, but this isn't just down to the changes, although I'm sure it has had an influence. Feedback from new parents' open days tells us that they do want their children to come to the school."



Teaching has become much more enjoyable for the teachers as well as the pupils.



## An innovative product for the market

Choosing VELUX Modular Skylights ultimately created a better solution



Representing the main contractor, BJ Smith of Willmott Dixon rated VELUX Modular Skylights as the perfect choice for the school.

“ There was always close communication with VELUX, which was reassuring

BJ Smith,  
Willmott Dixon.



Venting modules provide fresh air and cooling to classrooms and common areas.



Blinds protect against glare and help to keep a pleasant temperature regardless of weather outside.

VELUX was always the choice of roof window for the new school, however, it wasn't until the sub-contractor made a call to BJ Smith of Willmott Dixon that eyes were set on the commercial model, VELUX Modular Skylights. BJ Smith, representing the main contractor, was keen to change the specification.

“The modular skylights were more streamlined and therefore offered a better looking profile in comparison to the previous model we had looked into. The fact that the skylights were modular meant the installation was going to be simpler as they could clip in fairly quickly.”

BJ Smith appreciated the guidance, which was provided by the Danish company. VELUX experts helped

to demonstrate the installation process by mounting two skylights, after which the installation crew took over and were able to complete four units every third day. “The installation process was easy and tidy,” BJ Smith comments.

Now that the school is finished and all skylights are in place, BJ Smith can fully appreciate the choice he made.

“The modular skylights are aesthetically pleasing. They aren't bulky and have a good finish. The sharp, compact features fit well into the building. It is an innovative product for the market.”



Teachers can operate the skylights with the VELUX user-friendly remote control. The unit provides easy access to venting and sunscreening-functionality as well as scheduled operation and other programming features.



# VELUX modularity made a big difference

Simplicity ensured a fast and trouble-free installation process



1. Module pallets are labelled with letters and numbers, providing practical guidance on how to distribute and handle the products on the building site.



2. Prior to delivery the sub-construction has been prepared for the installation crew.



3. Modules are lifted onto the roof and mounted side-by-side with the use of only one bracket and one type of hex-screw.



4. Prefabricated cladding is added to the installation, making finalisation easy with no need for adjustment or customisation.

As the sub-contractor, Guy Rutherford of Southern Industrial Roofing made the suggestion to try out the VELUX Modular Skylights, and he too is pleased with the outcome.

"The modular skylights are definitely better than fitting standard windows to a roof pitch less than 15 degrees. Unlike standard skylights, you don't need a bar which interconnects the windows. You can just connect them together, which means it is easier and less specialist equipment is needed for the installation process. In turn, the internal finish is sleeker and more sophisticated," says Guy Rutherford.

Thanks to the simplicity of the installation the labour cost remained low. As a consequence the entire project was completed relatively fast and well within budget. Guy Rutherford appreciates the success of this installation, since it qualifies as a valuable reference in the planning of future projects.

"Going forward, I can definitely recommend the modular skylights to future customers as a viable and cost effective solution."

The finished installation on the roof of St. Francis Primary School. Each longlight comprises an air-tight and weather-proofed skylight and offers one of the best energy performance profiles on the market.







“ The pupils themselves are so much more aware of their environment

Angela Hewkin,  
Head Teacher

“ There is plenty of light coming into both the common areas and the classrooms, adding life to the building

BJ Smith,  
Willmott Dixon