

immersivereality

Inconjunction with

experia
multisensory for everyone



“Excellent.
First-class!”

Helen Farnell, Executive Headteacher at Polden Bower School



Polden Bower School

Polden Bower is a special school in Bridgwater, Somerset, which caters for 160 students with complex needs, including those with significant mobility difficulties. The students range in ages from 4 to 16. The creation of the school has provided additional much-needed school places for students with special educational needs across the region.

Pupils, parents and teachers influenced Polden Bower's design, which includes a warm water pool for physiotherapy, a sports hall, dining hall, sensory and therapy rooms, as well as fully-accessible classrooms equipped with the latest teaching technology. So many amazing spaces for pupils to relax, learn, and enjoy!

Supporting physical and sensory needs

As well as all of these amazing facilities, the school's external area also includes a sensory garden, multi-use games area and adventure playground – providing lots of spaces to support the pupils' physical and sensory needs.

There is also a café to help students develop life skills and to encourage engagement and interaction with the wider community. This is particularly beneficial for the older students, who can learn about the world of work.

Somerset County Council wanted to create the school as part of the local authority's initiative to increase SEN school provisions throughout the district. This ensures that more children with special educational needs can have their requirements met close to home, as well as in high quality modern facilities.





Children first

Construction of the school started in 2018, and was completed during the pandemic, as well as on a challenging site that had to battle flooding after multiple winter storms! The construction team involved overcame many obstacles to deliver the school successfully to Somerset County Council.

The team at Polden Bower pride themselves on their educational philosophy – knowing that whatever they do, it is always children first. At Polden Bower they aspire to be the best, and more importantly achieve the best outcomes for their pupils. Their mantra is ‘Believe you can’ – as they embrace the view that all people are unique and require access to an education that reflects their differences.

A modern and innovative school, Polden Bower wanted to provide an inclusive sensory space to provide multi-functionality to all students. This is why an immersive space was the perfect sensory solution for them.

Immersive Reality worked closely with architects, the school, and other key stakeholders to create the awe-inspiring space, which is designed for teaching, stimulation, learning and enjoying new experiences and simulations.

The Outcome

We specifically designed and constructed the room to fit an immersive space, hence the very large size of the room – two thirds of the room is the immersive space, and the other third of the room is an incorporated sensory room.

One of our team members stated, **“We were very lucky as the room was purpose built, but this meant working closely with architects, the construction company, electricians, carpet fitters and other trades to ensure the school got the perfect room.”**

Because the room was built with an immersive space in mind, the creation process was made much easier. However, we have also worked with establishments in the past who have had existing rooms specifically adapted to accommodate an immersive space. This shows how diverse our rooms are – they can either be worked into the design of a new school, or incorporated into a room in an existing school.

Accessible for all, the space is versatile and can be used for many different purposes.





A huge impact



"The uses of the space range from teaching and learning, employability skills, relaxation, therapeutic intervention, nurture intervention among many others. It has also been used for a memory activity following a child death we experienced in the school."

The school has seen a huge impact on communication and language, as well as improved engagement in pupils' learning since the installation of our immersive space. The benefits of the room are endless!

The students at Polden Bower love interacting with the extensive range of content available in the immersive space. The most popular scenes are the underwater scenes, woodland scenes and the calming candles scene.

Excellent – First Class! Talk openly to the team about the use of the space and the experiences you want to create. They actively listen, and certainly worked with us to create the best. Talk to the team – they are excellent!"

Helen Farnell, Executive Headteacher



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