

7th June 2019

Scottish school redesigns its Junior Hall around new flooring by Gerflor

St Columba's is one of Scotland's highest achieving schools, which is consistently ranked within the top ten independent schools in Scotland. With an Early Years, Junior and Senior School, 700 pupils and national representation at sport, music, debating and public speaking, its standards are high.

The school's historic 19th century building is situated in Kilmacolm, close to Glasgow. It was the need to replace the flooring within its Junior School's multi-purpose hall and two corridors located within the school's 1970's building extension that has brought the refurbished areas into the 21st century.

Extremely high standards were therefore a priority when carrying out the two flooring renovation projects under the management of St Columba's newly appointed Facilities Manager. "The hall is an all-round area that is regularly used for activities like assemblies, exams, parents' evenings and for the younger pupils' games and gymnastics lessons. We therefore needed an equally all-round, multi-purpose flooring to cater for this diversity and to replace the old and unsightly tiles which were in very poor condition," said Alasdair McGregor, Facilities Manager, St Columba's School.

As a result, the school was undertaking two important refurbishments simultaneously and required floorcoverings that could be relied upon to provide the functionality, performance and looks required.

"As I had worked with Virginia Harris of Gerflor in a previous appointment, I knew I could rely on both her expertise and the reliability of Gerflor's products," said Alasdair. "We ascertained that Gerflor's Taraflex® Multi-Use was the flooring product most suitable for the hall renovation as it combined the aesthetic, hardwearing and safety characteristics we wanted. Whereas Gerflor's Mipolam Elegance vinyl sheet flooring with the best abrasion resistance group T rating and high stain resistance for heavy traffic use was ideal for our busy corridors."

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Furthermore St Columba's School wanted to give the juniors' hall a modern look to reflect its multi-functional purpose. Plus, it wanted to establish a theme around which the hall could be completely refurbished to include walls, curtains and fittings. Gerflor's Taraflex Multi-Use flooring proved to have the range of designs, colours and visual appeal necessary on which to base the décor of the entire room.

"We designed the whole assembly hall around the flooring! I'm really delighted with the result and everyone who uses the school comments on it," explained Alasdair. "We chose Gerflor's Wood Grey design to create a more contemporary look than a traditional wood effect flooring. Sheet vinyl also gave us an improved overall aesthetic to the finished floor."

However, of equal importance to aesthetics was durability and so Alasdair McGregor had concerns about the potential damage that high heels and heavy items like pianos and vaulting equipment could cause: "I was re-assured by Gerflor that Taraflex Multi-Use would withstand these things and it has done. I'm very impressed: the floor levels out to be perfectly flush without indentation marks after furniture has to be moved about."

In a school environment like St Columba's, building works often need to be scheduled into holiday periods so contractors that can be relied upon to work within the given timescales are essential. Local firm, Muirgroup Interiors, who had previously worked successfully with the school, carried out the refurbishments to include installing 200 sqm of Taraflex Multi-Use (6.2mm) in Wood Grey in the hall and 100 sqm of Miplolam Elegance Raspberry Grey in the corridors, with both areas completed on schedule.

James Magill of Muirgroup Interiors said: "The client selected an overall package designed around Gerflor's flooring that would complement the décor and provide a fully functioning multi-purpose room with a neutral background allowing activities to be carried out with little or no distractions. The corridor installation became tricky due to a major problem being discovered in the sub floor, this led to us having to create channels and infill them with specialised screed prior to the vinyl floorcoverings being laid. Due to the short timescale involved, it was important that the flooring materials could be fitted quickly with no disturbance to the children. Once completed the effect in the corridor was very good and all parties were extremely pleased with the outcome."

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As St Columba's has an above average national representation at sport, physical exercise is an important part of the school curriculum starting from an early age. Gerflor's Taraflex Multi-Use is designed to take the weight of typical exercise and gymnastics equipment without damage, whilst providing a safe, cushioned surface for physical activities.

Taraflex Multi-Use is a high performance, P1 category sports floor in attractive wood designs and colours which complies with EN Standard 14904 and offers a host of benefits to include superior indentation and abrasion resistance, plus D-max reinforcement for heavy loads. It provides appropriate levels (25-35%) of shock absorption for multi-purpose use and has a built-in Protescol® surface treatment for easy maintenance, intelligent sliding coefficient and a lower risk of friction burns. Additionally, bacteriostatic and fungistatic treatments offer maximum hygiene.

Developed by flooring specialist Gerflor to withstand extreme levels of wear and tear in demanding, contract applications like schools, Mipolam Elegance's exclusive surface treatment combines Evercare™ for easy maintenance and anti-bacterial and fungicidal treatments for easy cleaning and the hygienic removal of stains with the minimum of water and detergent. Scuff resistant, it does not require waxing or polishing for the life of the product to maintain its bright appearance.

Both Taraflex Multi-Use and Mipolam Elegance's patented surface treatments also allow environmentally-friendly, low cost cleaning routines. "Maintenance is very important to us as our floorings come under heavy use. Gerflor supplied the technical details required by our external cleaning contractor. We are very happy with the results."

"The Board of Governors is also very pleased with the way the projects have turned out," said Alasdair, adding: "It's my job to make sure that projects like these work well and have a good, long lasting effect on the school. The products we choose are key to their success and Gerflor's products have proved first class."

For more information about Gerflor solutions, order a free sample or to speak to a specialist call 01926 622600 / email: contractuk@gerflor.com or visit www.gerflor.co.uk

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