

Special: The New East Manchester Academy

Project: East Manchester Academy

Location: Manchester

Client: Manchester City Council

Architect: Walker Simpson

Main contractor: Balfour Beatty

Specialist contractor:
Mansell Finishes

Materials used:
Lafarge Plasterboard

The design of The East Manchester Academy is very inviting, highly impressive, innovative and environmentally progressive. Opened in September 2010, the academy is one of the most noticeable and prestigious landmarks in east Manchester. It is a design in which pupils will feel safe,

secure and very special. And as the academy says: "Good architecture is essential to the academy's philosophy, as it can make a real difference to the quality of school life and can transform learning experiences."

One of the main features is the free flowing area to the atrium which connects the main entrance, reception, school library, blocks one and two and to the sports hall. Mansell Finishes worked with Balfour Beatty's Design team to make changes to the setting out of the atrium ceiling bulkheads to allow the finished ceilings look more aesthetically pleasing to the eye.

Services were designed to

be exposed throughout, with no suspended ceilings, which required high level of finish. The high level atrium ceiling was built from Lafarge GTEC Pregybel boards and Rockfon Samson acoustic tiles, enclosed in J channel and perimeter fixed direct to concrete soffit and partitioned walls which allowed noise to be absorbed and prevent sound reverberation.

CMS SuperPhon absorbent, fabric covered acoustic panels were hung as baffles from the soffit as there was very limited space. This technique has now been incorporated in other Manchester schools.

As the client needed to have access above the ceiling area,



Mansell Finishes installed Lafarge Pregybel plasterboards cut to size as access panels which provided a seamless ceiling with invisible access panels. Then in order to provide an airtight seal to the internal and external walls Mansell Finishes designed a system which incorporated an SAS powder coated angle and Lafarge Intumescent Acoustic Sealant.

The key feature of this building that makes it stand out as an exceptional drylining contract is the requirement by the architect that all services were to be exposed throughout with no suspended or metal frame ceilings. This required not only a high level of finish but also close co-ordination with the main contractor and other trades to deliver acoustically as well as aesthetically.

Putting estimating technology to good use

Technology can have a big impact on contracts at all stages in the project life cycle and for Merseyside-based MG Ceilings & Linings it's made a big difference.

Established in 1985, MG Ceilings & Linings provides design and installation services for offices, commercial and industrial buildings throughout the private and public sector. Steve Williams, the commercial manager of MG Ceilings & Linings, has been using On-Screen Takeoff for two years and over a span of 80 jobs.

Williams recently completed a drywall and plastering job for a health centre in Oswestry, Shropshire. The project scope included drywall metal stud partition and ceilings, plastering, and grid suspended ceilings to be completed in 16 weeks.

On-Screen Takeoff was a beneficial tool from the onset of the bidding process—the programme reduced MG Ceilings' overhead costs in compiling the bid, and allowed the estimator to more accurately quantify the work. It also helped MG Ceilings & Linings win the bid.

As Williams explains: "Issuing the marked-up

drawings with our bid gave the client comfort in knowing what the scope of work allowed, so any adjustments were then easily agreed upon." Accuracy was equally matched by efficiency. Williams estimates that the electronic takeoff produced with On-Screen Takeoff saved his company 3–4 man days of work.

Williams didn't log out of On-Screen Takeoff once the project commenced, either. The program was used to quantify variations, evaluate works complete for interim valuations to the client for stage payments, agree and

monitor subcontractor works, quantify material requirements for quotations, issue material loading plans (breaking the works down into areas/levels), and assess tender wastage allowances against onsite wastage. All of these factors not only allowed MG Ceilings & Linings to complete the job, but to do it with a level of precision unmatched by any manual efforts.

As to the future of MG Group's technology adoption, Steve has stated: "We are looking to use On-Screen Takeoff and Quick Bid throughout the various

companies of MG Group." And with his previous successes using On-Screen Takeoff, Williams is working toward company-wide expansion of On Center Software's estimating software, including the recent adoption of Quick Bid. "Two of my colleagues are now using On-Screen Takeoff on a daily basis. I am getting up to speed with Quick Bid with a view to using it to make the costing side of our bids more efficient and accurate."

To find out more about On Center Software contact them at 00.1.866.627.6246, or visit www.oncenter.com.