

INVESIS PASSES THE TEST IN SCHOOLS PROJECTS



South Bromsgrove High School, Bromsgrove, England

In education terms, Invesis has been building, refurbishing and maintaining schools long enough to have graduated at the very top of its class.

For over 20 years it has been delivering high-quality schools projects through public private partnerships (PPPs), starting with the €52m Dalkeith Schools Community Campus, incorporating four schools and reaching financial close in July 2002.

Since then, the Invesis education portfolio has grown to 51 schools with over 39,000 pupils across 13 different PPPs spanning England, Ireland, Scotland and Belgium. Their total capital value comes to just short of €1bn. What's more, Invesis has become a driving force in the

development of schools PPPs in the USA where this sector is in its infancy.

Certainly, users are enthusiastic about what they get in an Invesis school. Chris Smith, Headteacher of South Bromsgrove High School (a €94 million programme which saw the completion of seven new schools by 2008 followed by a 30-year concession period) reports that, when asked 'what do you consider unique selling points of the school' in a 2024 Ofsted survey, a parent focus group declared that "the facilities of the school are fantastic."

Those facilities are the subject of the company's ambition to inform and enable all of its clients to get on board with initiatives to accelerate progress towards net zero in the construction and management of all the schemes it engages with.



51
Schools



39,000
Pupils



Capital Value
of €1bn

Declan Gallagher, Project Director at Invesis describes the journey towards sustainability that Invesis has been on in its schools PPPs: “In 2011 sustainability was already a part of the landscape for Invesis – so we installed rainwater harvesting systems and photovoltaic (PV) panels, for example. But there wasn’t the same focus on these issues as there is now, so public authorities were generally more concerned about costs.”



Declan Gallagher
Project Director

Times have changed though, and the school authorities are now much more inclined to commission sustainable solutions. In fact, at Egied Van Broeckhoven, a £30m project situated in a multicultural district of Brussels, with construction scheduled to finish in summer 2024 and a subsequent 30-year concession period, Invesis has overseen the installation of a state of the art – cold and heat storage system. This is producing an environment that is as conducive as possible to the students’ concentration and comfort while also prioritising energy savings.

One substantial factor in the success of the education projects it undertakes, is the ongoing nature of Invesis’ involvement, throughout the lifetime of the concession. As Wayne Walbrook, Project Director puts it, “It’s hard or any competitors to say they’ve spent as much time in schools projects and it’s fair to say that, in terms of years and depth of experience and number of schools projects won, Invesis is a market leader.”



Wayne Walbrook
Project Director

Not only does this offer valuable continuity from the construction to operational phases and profound understanding of any historic issues that might impact future usage, but it puts Invesis in an ideal position to drive sustainability improvements during the lifetime of the project.

Many schools are also now community hubs after school hours. The social benefits of this approach can be sizeable and this is also a hot topic in the US where Invesis is at the forefront of those championing a PPP schools model.



Egied van Broeckhoven, Brussels, Belgium



Irish Schools Bundle 3
Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa, Doon, Ireland

The company has brought its experience in this sector to an initiative of the Association for the Improvement of American Infrastructure to educate school districts on how to structure PPP programmes given that there is currently only one programme like that in the US, with a second about to go reach financial close.

For Invesis, engagement with the entire design, build and operations process allows it to police quality, prices and completion deadlines in consultation with the builders, the school authority and the FM companies. Familiarity with local marketplaces is also part of this equation. In Irish Schools Bundles 3 and 4, that knowledge led to a diversification of tier 1 sub-contractors and materials to take account of the limited size of manufacturers in Ireland.

Another skill that can be essential is working in a live school environment. Gallagher describes the recent €10m teaching block extension to Ard Scoil na Mara, Tramore, part of Irish Schools Bundle 3, saying, “We had daily discussions with the school, so if we were screeding on a certain day, we had to warn of the noise and make sure teachers were advised in specific classrooms to keep their windows closed.”

This is the minutiae that makes a big difference and it requires meticulous communication and trust. Those ongoing relationships that Invesis has with its clients over the entire term of its schools projects enable it to offer continuing support to the schools and local authorities (informed by the lessons from other schools it is working on) and allow the parties to build the type of trust and flexibility that can be crucial.

Preparations for the 2026 hand back of the Peacehaven Schools project have been underway since 2022 and from that experience, Invesis will have its own 'handback manual' to guide head teachers through the process. This will give the Invesis team knowledge of the entire lifecycle and prior understanding of what to expect at all stages of its schools projects. No wonder the company is actively bidding a number of upcoming education projects in Belgium and Flanders.

With experience in building, repurposing or extending schools, ongoing commitment to outcomes for students and communities, the deep knowledge and relationships that continuity brings, and its focus on future education opportunities across the globe, Invesis is clearly in it for the long haul.



Peacehaven Schools - Peacehaven Community School, East Sussex, England

OUR EXPERTS



Declan Gallagher, Project Director



Wayne Walbrook, Project Director



Geert Deleebeeck, Project Director



Carlos Lopez Vilardell, Vice President Business Development



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Iain Harris, Asset Management Director