



Commercial Science & Tech Community Residential **Education** Healthcare Transport Masterplanning Sustainability

# CASTLE @ THEALE

## SEMH SCHOOL, THEALE

Oxford Architects were appointed to refurbish an existing Church of England primary school into a new SEMH (Social, Emotional, and Mental Health) provision for West Berkshire Council. The existing school consisted of several derelict modular buildings and two existing structures: one built in the 1980s and the other constructed in 1833 as part of the Diocese of Oxford.

The goal was to create an open and inviting teaching environment for pupils and staff, incorporating natural daylight and a carefully selected colour palette of materials and finishes that complement the sensitive nature of the SEMH pupils attending the school. The design focused on ensuring the environment felt welcoming rather than clinical or institutional.

The building's thermal performance was designed to a high specification of robustness and finish to withstand the behaviour of dis-regulated pupils. Significant upgrades to the thermal envelope and the implementation of sustainability measures improved the energy performance of the existing buildings. These enhancements elevated the Energy Performance Asset Rating from D and F to a new EPC rating of A, significantly reducing day-to-day running costs and lowering the school's carbon footprint.



### PROJECT DETAILS

- SCOPE**  
Refurbishment and redevelopment of existing primary school site to SEMH provision.
- ROLE**  
Architect, Lead Designer and Principle Designer
- CONTRACT**  
Traditional
- CLIENT**  
West Berkshire Council
- VALUE**  
£5.1m
- DATES**  
Completed 2023

### KEY ASPECTS

- Special education
- EPC - A
- Sustainable energy/design