



# A LESSON IN GOOD DESIGN

Phoenix Integrated Primary School in Cookstown (County Tyrone) launched a design competition in April 2011 to design a vision for a new school on their Greenfield site on Fountain road, Cookstown. The competition was by invitation from the school and included large architectural firms in Scotland, Southern Ireland and throughout Northern Ireland. Wilson McMullen architects, a small, creative, design-led architectural firm based in Portrush (County Antrim), was the unanimous winner. The competition aimed at creating a vision for the school, a design that encompassed the very best of international design and pedagogical ideals.

The school was to be designed with the future in mind and would aim to consider the impact of the school on the natural environment and on the local community.

Wilson McMullen Architect's design was selected as the first-place winner by three independent groups of judges. This included the principal of the school, the board of governors and a pupil lead judging panel. It was thought that the design best addressed the client's brief and provided an exciting and creative vision for the future of the school and the local community.



A key concept of the winning design was to create an accessible and intimate building that engaged with its context, environment, local community and most importantly, the children and staff. It is to be a school that interacts closely with its natural surroundings through direct connection with outdoor play and communal spaces as well as integrating energy saving construction and renewable technologies within the design.

"It is hoped that the school building will create a sense of place and give Phoenix Integrated Primary school a clear and approachable identity within its community and within Northern Ireland. Most importantly it should be an invigorating and exciting place to go to school and to visit!" Ben Wilson.

Although winning the competition does not lead to a direct appointment initially, the hope is that the school will successfully secure funding in the forthcoming years and Wilson McMullen architects will get the opportunity to realise their creative competition winning entry.

Written by Ben Wilson, Owner and Principal Architect at Wilson McMullen Architects, Portrush

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