

# Giving pupils the perfect learning environment

Award-winning building contractor Cold Control Services has secured a number of school contracts. *HVR* examines the company's commitment to the BSF programme

**COLD CONTROL** Services, an independent, accredited air conditioning and refrigeration contractor, has embraced the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.

The company is committed to supporting the BSF programme, which is the largest investment in improving school buildings for more than 50 years. The government is investing significant funds in schools on maintaining and improving the quality of their building and environment.

"Considering the current climate, government money is the safest money," comments James Coles, Cold Control's contracts manager.

Building contractors and sub-contractors play a pivotal role in the implementation of creating and maintaining the school environment.

The installer has to meet specific criteria and pass qualifying interviews before they can even be considered to tender for the business because of the large number of schools requiring health and safety accreditations. Cold Control has several National recognised accreditations, including Contractors Health and Safety Assessment (CHAS) and Safe Contractor, "otherwise local authorities and schools would not even invite or entertain our tenders", adds Coles.

The majority of the work is carried out during school holidays and, while it may impose a strain on the installer having to work within a tight schedule, it ensures minimal disruption for the school. From a health and safety aspect, it is safer if the work is executed while there are no pupils within

**The majority of the work is carried out during holidays to ensure minimum disruption**

the vicinity.

And, as part of working within schools, a member of staff will escort engineers at all times while on school premises when the school is open.

The installer has an impressive reputation within the construction industry, which was recognised early this year having been awarded Contractor of the Year (under £10m) by the *ACR News* awards.

Because of its compliance with government requirements, it is able to work directly for individual schools, which is beneficial as payment is punctual compared with the release of monies, especially retention funds, when working for main contractors.

"There are a number of new build schools where Cold Control has been brought in to undertake the M&E work as a sub-contractor," Coles continues.

## School hall air conditioning

A recent project Cold Control undertook under the BSF programme was the design and installation of an air conditioning system in the school hall at Guildford High School in Surrey. It carried out an in-depth consultation process and specified a Mitsubishi multi-split system as an ideal option, ensuring a uniform distribution of air to provide a better learning environment for pupils. Eight internal fan coil units and four external condensing units were installed.

The company understands poor ventilation can have a detrimental effect on a student's productivity and health. Furthermore, current legislation is shaping the indoor environment. The government's Building Bulletin 101 focuses on ventilation in school buildings and states that the performance standard for a school building is based on the requirement to regulate the indoor air quality and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> levels. A lack of constant airflow can cause tiredness and it can also increase the chances that the health of pupils and staff may be affected.

In a recent, independent report on behalf of the Department for



Guildford High School hall: poor ventilation can have a detrimental effect on a student's productivity and health

Children, Schools and Families, 51% of pupils disagreed that the temperature in teaching classrooms was comfortable throughout the year, with an additional 32% disagreeing strongly.

Recently, the contractor was asked by Norland Place School, North London, to replace its 1970s heating in the Young Hall (which was built in 1980). The company installed a Daikin VRV System as the ideal air management system to provide a regular temperature and ensure good air quality.

## Very impressed

"I am very impressed with the excellent service we continue to receive from Cold Control," says Ian Justham, the Bursar of Norland Place school. "I have received reports of the beneficial effects that the air conditioning has had within the school."

Coles comments on how the company was awarded the work. "We were recommended by a main building contractor which was replacing the school roof at the time. The client was very pleased with what was in fact a simple solution for us and now we have a solid and ongoing relationship with both the school and the builder."

Coles insists Cold Control is not just about air conditioning. The

company will install complete ventilation systems if required including heat pump/heat recovery systems where necessary.

In new-build properties, which are now more air tight when built, optimising ventilation with fresh air intervals is key to providing a comfortable environment.

Many schools have ICT rooms, with the heat from 30 to 40 computers (not to mention the pupils) generating a huge amount of heat and CO<sub>2</sub>, which again is not the most productive of learning environments for pupils.

The company has recently air conditioned three ICT suites and the library at Hampton Community College.

A consultant designed this project and Cold Control installed a VRF system with an outdoor condensing unit.

The company offers a five-year warranty on work undertaken and promotes regular maintenance, which it believes is the backbone of productivity and longevity. A number of the schools have used Cold Control's national dedicated service and maintenance package.

The provision of service and maintenance provides both peace of mind for the school and the knowledge that pupils are always in the perfect learning environment.