Heckmondwike Grammar School

Classroom Block Hire

Client: Heckmondwike Grammar School

Sector: Education

Location: Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire

The Brief

Heckmondwike Grammar School required a two-storey classroom block to expand teaching capacity without interrupting daily school life. The building had to be craned into position over existing school structures, which required a temporary road closure and careful scheduling of works outside school hours.

Originally intended as a short-term hire solution, the block proved so robust and effective that the school retained it for over 20 years, far exceeding its expected lifecycle. The design provided flexible, well-equipped teaching spaces with modern finishes, natural light, and ICT integration. Safety, sustainability, and architectural harmony with the existing site were all central to the project's success.

Project: Hire of 2 storey classroom block

Location: Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire

Hire Period: Originally 5 years, successfully continued for 20 years

Project Cost: £420 per week

Timeline: Project delivered within two weeks, from initial site setup through to handover

Key Features: Two-storey modular construction, crane-lifted installation, interactive learning technology, 20 year hire period.

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The Main Features

Outside

- **Two-Storey Modular Structure-** Delivered in 14 modules, the building maximised teaching capacity within a compact footprint, providing efficient use of space and enhanced on-site functionality.
- **Plastisol-Coated Exterior Panels-** The building envelope used plastisol-coated steel cladding, providing weather resistance, low maintenance, and a clean, professional finish that performed effectively throughout its 20-year service.
- **Robust Steel Framework-** A durable steel structural frame supported the modular design, ensuring strength, stability, and compliance with building standards while enabling precise craned installation on site.
- **Double-Glazed Aluminium Windows-** Large double-glazed aluminium windows maximised natural light, improving energy efficiency and providing a bright, welcoming environment for both teaching staff and students.
- **Secure Access Points-** External steel doors with integrated vision panels ensured safety, security, and accessibility, supporting secure circulation while maintaining compliance with modern accessibility requirements.

Inside

- **Modern Teaching Environments-** Classrooms feature interactive whiteboards, projector systems, and durable finishes, creating inspiring, flexible learning spaces designed to support varied teaching methods and student engagement.
- **Integrated ICT Infrastructure-** Built-in cabling, wireless connectivity, and secure mounting for digital tools ensure a technology-rich environment that supports modern teaching and adapts to future upgrades.
- **Energy-Efficient Lighting and Ventilation-** Prismatic diffusers, natural ventilation, and mechanical systems provide comfort, reduce energy costs, and ensure a bright, healthy learning environment for both staff and students.
- **Flexible Partitioning and Layout-** Reconfigurable partitions allow classrooms to adapt for group work, ICT labs, or traditional lessons, supporting evolving curriculum and teaching needs over time.
- **Safe and Durable Interiors-** Fire-rated doors, robust flooring, and impact-resistant finishes ensure safety, compliance, and long-term durability under continuous, heavy use by students and staff.

Challenges

The project presented numerous challenges, which we addressed with determination and creativity. Some of the key obstacles included:

Complex Site Conditions

Delivering a large, two-storey modular block within a fully operational school required careful sequencing and risk management. Construction activity had to be planned to avoid disrupting teaching while maintaining the highest safety standards. Every stage, from deliveries to craning, was meticulously managed to balance operational continuity with construction efficiency.

Road Closure Constraints

The installation demanded temporary closure of the busy road running alongside the school. This presented significant logistical and community challenges, requiring approval from local authorities and clear communication with residents. Careful scheduling ensured closures happened at low-traffic times, minimising disruption and maintaining safety for the school and surrounding neighbourhood.

Out-of-Hours Installation

Craning modules into position directly over existing buildings could not be undertaken during teaching hours. Works were scheduled at night and weekends, requiring additional staff shifts, specialist supervision, and enhanced safety protocols. This ensured students and staff were unaffected, while allowing the project to progress smoothly without compromising operational timelines.

Structural Lifting Requirements

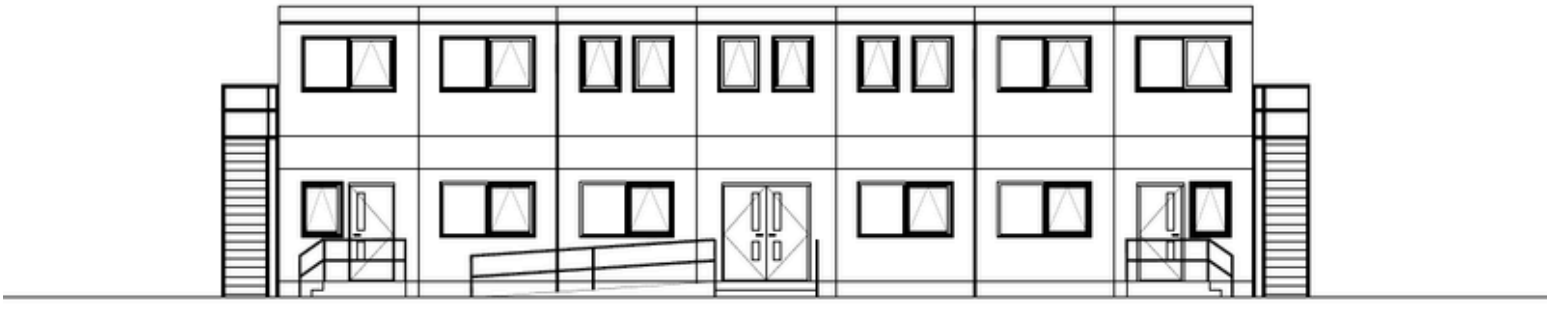
The project involved lifting heavy two-storey modules over existing school buildings, a task requiring precision engineering and highly trained crane operators. Strict safety measures were enforced to protect the site and surrounding community. By working with specialist contractors and robust planning, the modules were installed successfully without incident, ensuring project success.

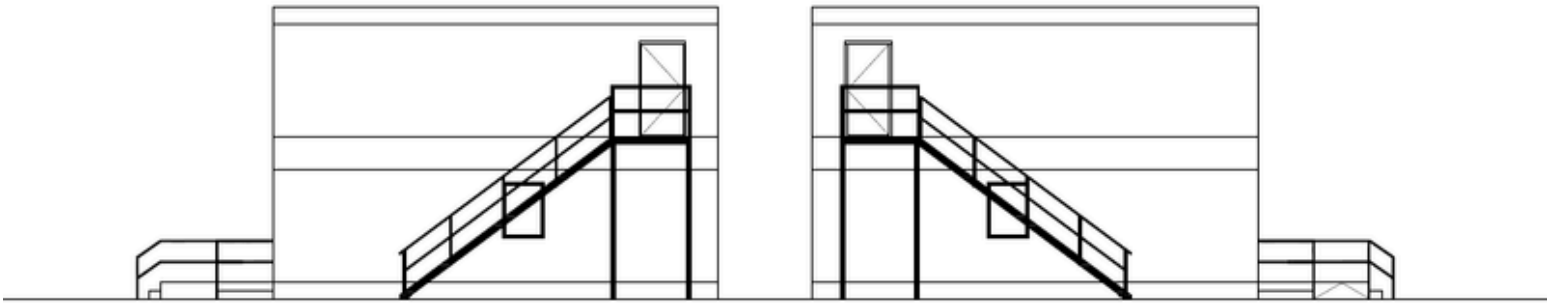
Minimising Disruption to Learning

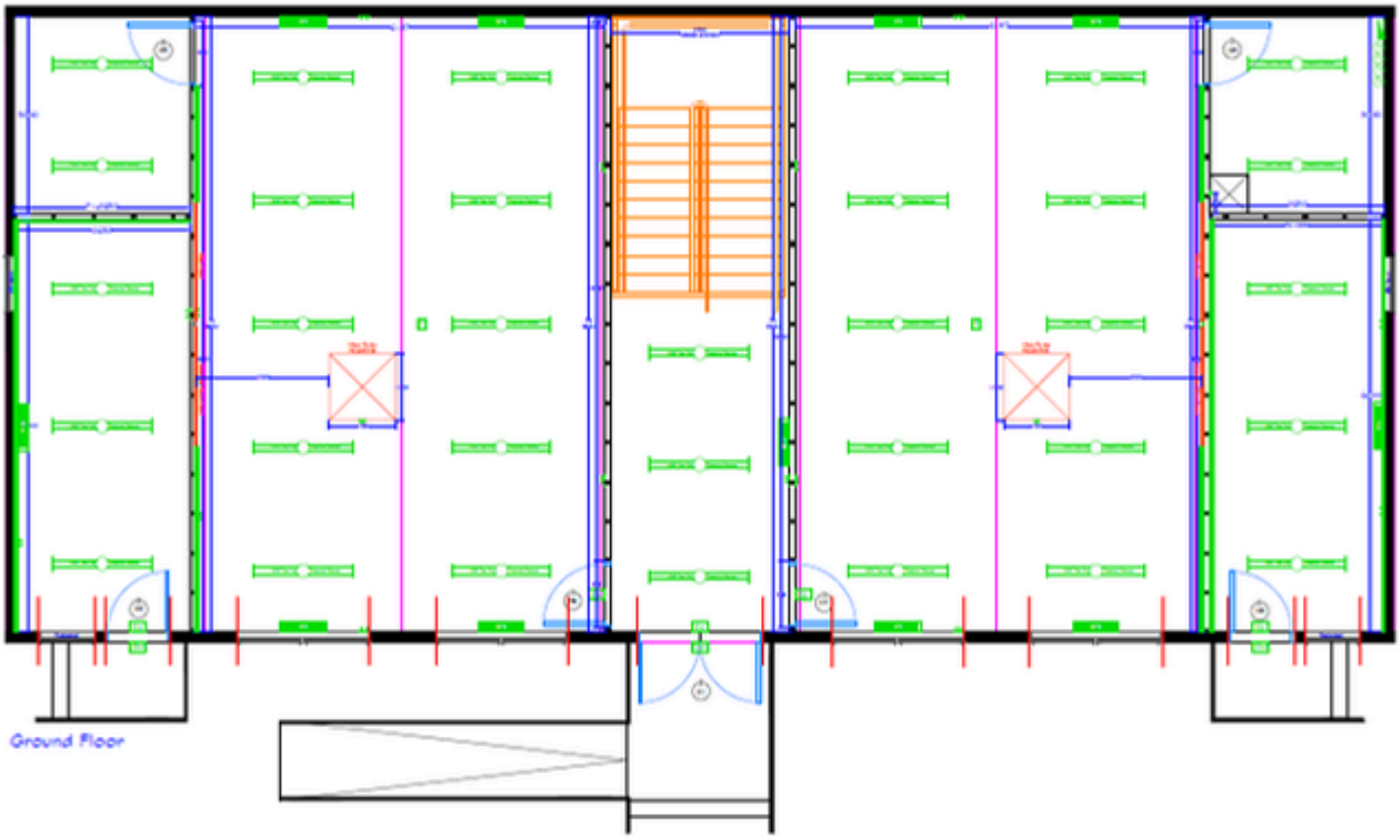
The school remained open throughout the project, so protecting the learning environment was paramount. Noise, dust, and restricted access routes had to be carefully controlled. Temporary barriers and phased works ensured classes continued without interruption. This balance between construction activity and uninterrupted education required constant coordination with school leadership.

Longevity Beyond Expectation

Although originally designed and installed as a short-term hire solution, the classroom block performed so well it was kept in place for 20 years. This unexpected longevity posed challenges for maintenance and upgrades. However, the durable finishes and flexible design ensured the building remained compliant, safe, and fully functional throughout.







Design Process

The design process combined detailed planning, architectural elevations, and service integration to ensure a safe, adaptable, and compliant classroom block. Collaboration between the school, engineers, and construction team ensured a solution that could be installed in one precise operation yet remain functional for decades.

> Our classroom was put in place in approx 2006 so what was meant to be a temporary solution to our ever expanding school became a 19yr fixture that more than served it purpose. Elite have always been on hand if needed but when the building was finally removed it was nearly as good as the day it was put in, less some wear and tear from the many students and staff who have used the building. Elite were very professional with the logistics and made everything very user friendly. It was sad to see it go but hopefully someone else will still get many more years from it. I would not hesitate to contact Marcus at Elite systems (GB) Ltd if ever we needed help with the same system again.
>
> Miss E Bennett, Site Manager
> *Heckmondwike Grammar School*

The Results

Cranes, Classrooms, and Continued Contribution

The Heckmondwike Grammar School classroom block delivered a rapid, high-quality expansion to teaching space while minimising disruption to students and staff. Installed in a single, precision craned operation, the project overcame complex site and logistical challenges, including a main road closure, through careful planning and out-of-hours working.

Originally intended as a short-term hire, the building's resilience, adaptability, and modern specification enabled it to remain in continuous use for more than 20 years. Internally, it provided bright, flexible, and technology-rich learning spaces, while externally, it integrated seamlessly with the existing campus.

This project stands as a testament to the long-term potential of modular construction, demonstrating how short-term solutions can evolve into enduring assets when designed and delivered with quality and foresight.