



• New school graces community

St Francis of Assisi Catholic School



Client: Ministry of Education

Location: Christchurch

Completion Date: 2016

The idea behind creating St Francis of Assisi Catholic School was to combine Our Lady of Fatima and St Paul's Schools following the Christchurch earthquake that damaged St Paul's in 2011. The new bespoke school also needed to support the teaching and learning philosophy of the local community.

The amalgamation of two schools on an existing site required master planning for 12 new teaching spaces, a library, larger administration facilities and a future school hall. The site also had to provide room for the future Church, church hall and presbytery which originally occupied the site before being demolished. Additional challenges included poor ground conditions, extensive storm water retentions and maintaining access and services to the existing school.

Opus ensured the building was significant so it could be recognized from the street but also so that it would fit in with the future church opposite. Our projecting eave and folded roof design draws visitors into the main entrance and beyond towards the centre of the school. The scale of the entrance is designed to create the spiritual uplifting of the faith and is reinforced by a feature wall and

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crucifix. An upper balcony allows students to venture outside and is visible from the street so the buildings are easily recognized as a school for children.

The interior design incorporates modern learning environments with the flexibility to create multiple smaller learning spaces. Incorporating Buckling Restraint Braces in our structural design allows for internal partitions to be easily removed in the future. The deliberate visibility of the braces provides reassurance to the school community of the safety and resilience of the building. Due to the need for lightweight construction and domestic natural materials, our palate ensures the appearance of the school complements the neighbourhood's environment.