

A progressive school – inside & out!

Kilberry Valley Primary School is progressive both inside and out. Since it opened ten years ago, the school has successfully achieved its vision of ‘developing responsible learners for a changing society’.

Located southeast of Melbourne, Kilberry Valley has a well defined mission. The school is committed to providing students with information technology, literacy and numeracy skills, helping them focus on continuous improvement, encouraging them to become motivated, active, reflective learners and assisting them to be flexible, adaptable and tolerant in the changing world.

Teaching spaces in this visionary school originally included well designed permanent classrooms complemented by several relocatables. Last year Kilberry extended its facilities by adding a new staff room with kitchen and senior personnel offices with storage area and courtyard and refurbished the existing administration wing to incorporate a new technology rich multimedia/television studio.

The new 190m² area and the studio were designed by Rowan Opat Architects, a very progressive firm. The company’s design philosophy is “simple but meaningful” and their previous built works include domestic, multi-residential, commercial, heritage and educational buildings.

The design Rowan Opat created for Kilberry Valley complements the original structure but displays its own distinct character. The school is situated on a busy road and, as the main entry point, the new building needed to make a dramatic impact and create a positive first impression.

The architects decided to retain the existing theme but re-interpret the context. Says Rowan, “We needed to allow for the changing curriculum in the school and to realise this in the form and materiality of the new project. We chose a bold design statement to create a sense of excitement and add a modern take because of the function of the building.”

“We wanted bricks in a uniform style but in mixed colours and textures. We recommended that they be laid in segments along the wall to break up the façade using 45 degree sills as a capping brick as a feature around the windows,” Rowan says.

“The original building used red and cream bricks beneath a red roof. By using a combination of Melbourne Red, Salmon Pink and Nevada Cream smooth bricks, we continued the red and cream tones, but then we added the contrast of blue-grey steel cladding.

“We broke up the appearance of a single brick wall surface by laying Pearl Grey Smooth bricks with a 45 degree angle shape on the sills.



This creates the impression of a shadow beneath the windows and adds extra interest to the expanse. The overall effect is to formalise a material change in the elevation and to bind together the overall treatment of the project.”

The work took six months and the project was completed in November 2008. Neil Cunningham, the School Principal, is delighted with the finished result. “It has really lifted the school’s facilities and we are enjoying using the new areas,” he says.



PROJECT: Kilberry Valley Primary School **ARCHITECT/DESIGNER:** Rowan Opat Architects
CLIENT: Kilberry Valley Primary School **BRICK PRODUCT:** Escura Smooth Face
BRICK COLOUR: Melbourne Red, Salmon Pink, Nevada Cream, Pearl Grey