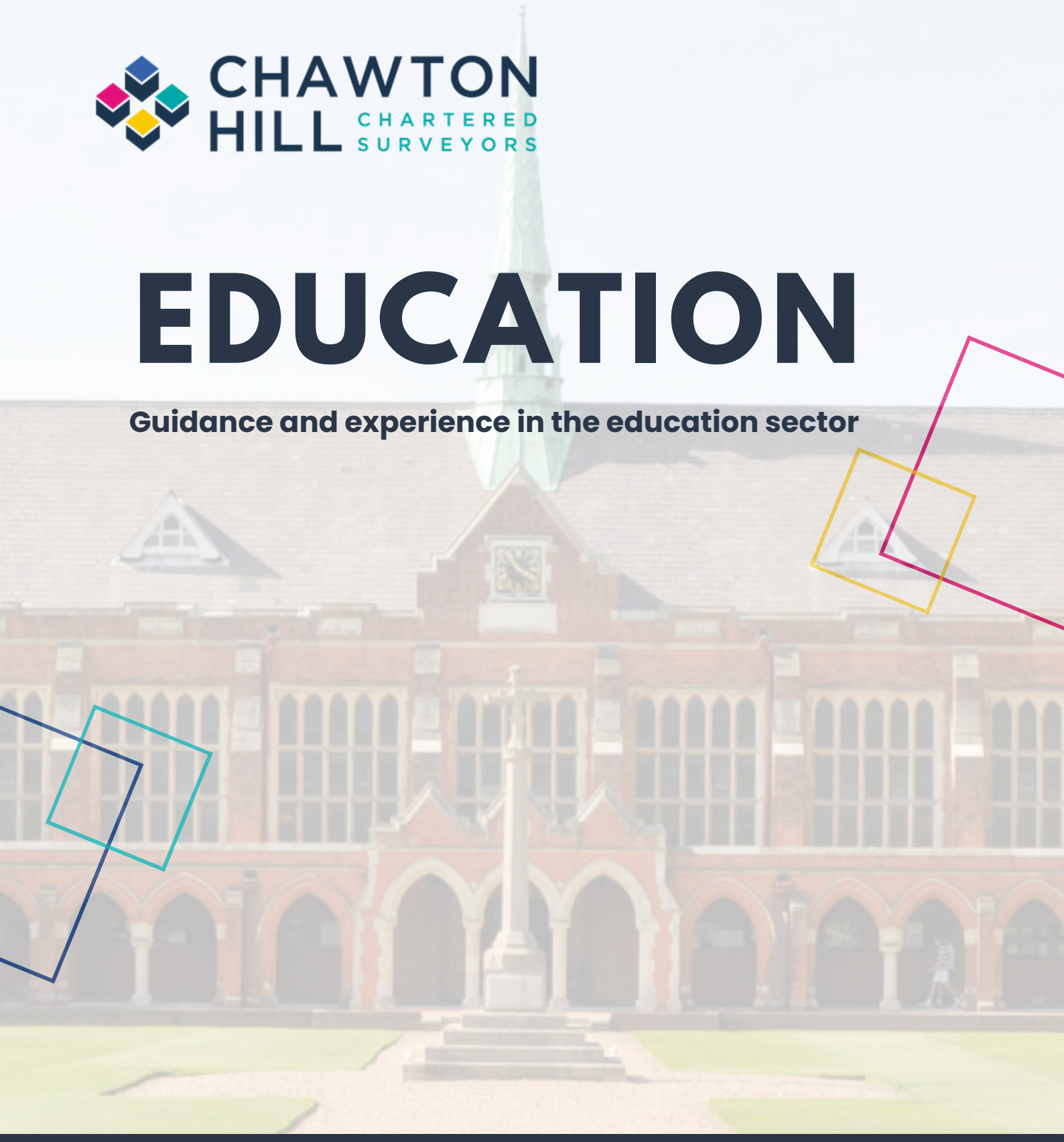
CHAWTON HILL CHARTERED SURVEYORS

EDUCATION

Guidance and experience in the education sector



chawtonhill.com



CONTENTS

3. Foreword
4. About Chawton Hill
5. Nescot College – Window Replacement and IoT Centre
6. Rooflight Replacement: St Luke's CofE Primary School, Kingston
7. Refurbishing School Buildings While Staying Operational
9. Eton College
10. St Teresa's Effingham
11. 5 Tips for Education Facilities
13. St Joseph's, Guildford
14. St Andrew's School
15. Solar Power for Schools?
17. Aldro School
18. Moor Lane Respite Centre
19. Common Building Issues in Schools & How Early Interventions Help Prevent Them
22. Nescot College
23. Shrewsbury House School

CHAWTON HILL

Thank you for your interest in Chawton Hill today. We're an enthusiastic and dedicated team of RICS Chartered Surveyors, construction consultants and project managers. Our RICS Chartered Surveyors and project managers deliver an exceptional construction and surveying support. From school development to sports grounds, energy to general maintenance we have a solution to support you.



This brief guide provides some insight and help into how we assist people in the education sector and some examples of past work. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



DAVID EDWARDS
Managing Director
david.edwards@chawtonhill.com
01372 360663



JAMES MATTHEWSON
Director
james.matthewson@chawtonhill.com
01372 360663



ABOUT
CHAWTON HILL

Chawton Hill have been helping education organisations in & around the South East since the very start of the practice, over twenty years ago. Our experience extends to Independent Schools, Foundation Schools and Academies.

We are active participants at the Independent School's Bursars Association conference and work closely with many educational establishments.

Whatever your need in the education sector, our team will be able to support you from beginning to end, ensuring your project is delivered successfully and within budget.

Your Education project will undoubtedly be something carried out after serious thought and careful consideration. It is therefore vital that you get the best professional advice possible to ensure success.

Supporting your college or school in bidding for funding is a specialism – success in bidding for funding will ensure you can implement the projects your students need.

Providing exceptional education facilities for schools and colleges is a core area of our business and stretches back to our incorporation. For us, it is one of the keystones of our business and we are proud to have worked at so many establishments and varied school types.

You can be confident working with Chawton Hill that we have experience working with independent schools, foundation schools and academies. Client commissions range from minor alteration works and building condition surveys for CIF bids, to the design and project management of new buildings and sensitively detailed extensions to schools.

Key Experience and Services:

Sports facilities, arts facilities, accessibility features, funding submissions, window replacement and planned maintenance, accommodation, renewable energy installations, reinstatement cost assessments, project and cost management, employer's agent and design and specification.

Nescot College – Window Replacement and IoT Centre

Project Details

Our client Nescot College appointed Chawton Hill to oversee a project to renovate one of its buildings, as the home for its Institute of Technology suite.

The college secured funds to replace the original timber and aluminium windows in one of its buildings, built in the 1980s. Upgrading the windows would enhance thermal efficiency and therefore reduce overheads. It would also improve the visual appearance of the building, helping it match with the rest of the campus.

Delivery and design

The contract for the fabrication and installation of the windows was awarded to Capital Windows. The installation needed to take place during term time, which meant careful planning was required to minimise disruption to students' learning. The work was carefully sequenced week-by-week, with stringent health and safety protocols in place to ensure students, staff and contractors were kept safe at all times.

It was vital the installation of the windows completed before the term ended so the next stage of the project could begin. The project worked its way through the building, moving each classroom out as the works progressed.

Following the installation of the windows, the work on the internal refurbishment of the classrooms in the technology suite could begin.

This technology suite would be home to a new style of classrooms. Full of the latest technology, including an AI room with working robots, the complexity of this project came from managing various stakeholder perspectives.

Challenges

The type of equipment being installed meant this project was technically challenging. It also needed additional security measures due to the expensive state-of-the-art tech. Chawton Hill looked to find a specialist subcontractor to handle the installation, but due to them being located in the USA, it was decided at the feasibility stage that this would be too risky.

Outcome

Instead, NESCOT procured the equipment directly and we worked with a local general building contractor to manage the install. Thanks to NESCOT College, and the entire project team for a job well done!





Rooflight Replacement: St Luke's CofE Primary School, Kingston



Project Details

Following some considerable time in the planning and obtaining funding another of our projects has completed. The project to replace the school's rooflights at St Lukes C of E Primary school in Kingston upon Thames completed a few months ago.

This £400,000.00 project was to replace all the rooflights in the main building, including classroom windows and the expansive windows in the main hall.

Challenges

As with many education projects, all works needed to be completed during the summer holidays to avoid interfering with teaching during term time. This meant a tight project programme was vital to avoid any overruns. Some issues prior to installation meant that the window supplier's original survey included some necessary assumptions. These assumptions led to a few challenges in the delivery of the project.

Nevertheless, the installation date could not be moved. Therefore, Chawton Hill worked with the contractor to find a solution and ensure on time completion. The project team worked through the weekends to make sure we were ready for the installation.

Outcome

Overall the project was a success, it was delivered on time and budget, with the school happy with their new and improved windows which not only look better aesthetically, but will deliver energy efficiencies.

Refurbishing School Buildings While Staying Operational

Refurbishing school buildings while keeping operations running is different from most construction projects. Buildings remain in constant use and even minor disruption can affect teaching and overall school performance. As a result, projects must be carefully planned, coordinated, and managed from the outset. In this article we examine some of the considerations when working in a live educational environment.

Understanding the Constraints of School Environments

School sites present a unique set of operational constraints. Shared spaces such as halls and dining areas are in daily use. Any works taking place must be designed around these patterns.

Health and safety is also a key consideration. Segregation of construction areas, clear signage, and controlled access points are essential. This it to ensure pupils, staff, and contractors can safely co-exist on site. It is particularly important in primary schools, where movement is less predictable and supervision requirements are higher.

Noise, dust, vibrations, and products being used must also be managed carefully. Works that may be easier on other projects, such as demolitions or roof replacements, can have a significant impact, especially in a live teaching environment if not properly timed and controlled.

Phases and Programme Management

A well-considered programme is critical to success. Rather than approaching works as a single construction project, they are often broken down into phases aligned with the academic calendar.

Holiday periods like Easter and half-term provide key opportunities for more disruptive activities. However, these windows are often short and require detailed planning well in advance. Term-time works, must be carefully sequenced to ensure that the spaces remain operational.

In many cases, temporary accommodation or decant strategies may be required. This could involve relocating classrooms within the existing building or introducing temporary units to maintain capacity while works progress.

Funding and Early Project Planning

Funding remains a significant issue for school refurbishment projects. Many schemes are reliant on programmes such as the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF), School Condition Allocations (SCA), or other government-backed initiatives. These often come with a strict criteria and deadlines.



Refurbishing School Buildings While Staying Operational

Early engagement is essential to align project timelines with these funding requirements. This includes developing clear cost plans and defining the priorities. Delays or inaccuracies at this stage can impact funding approval or lead to problems later in the project.

As highlighted in a recent education article early intervention is key. Identifying issues early and planning proactively can help avoid unnecessary costs and strengthen funding applications.

A clear understanding of costs, risks, and programme constraints allows schools and those working on the project to make informed decisions before committing to delivery.

Managing Risk, Cost, and Delivery

Working in a live environment increases project risk. Unforeseen issues, such as hidden defects in older buildings, can have a direct impact on the project schedule and budget if not properly managed. Ongoing cost control and clear communication between all parties is essential. This includes regular reporting, proactive risk management, and ensuring that any changes are assessed and agreed quickly to avoid delays.

Procurement strategy also plays an important role. Selecting the right contractor with experience of working in occupied environments can significantly reduce risk and improve overall project outcomes.

The Role of the Project Team

Successful school refurbishment projects rely on a coordinated approach from the start. Surveyors and project managers play a key role in guiding projects from initial feasibility through to completion.



This includes establishing realistic budgets, managing contracts, and ensuring that projects are delivered. These should be in line with both the proposed programme and funding requirements.

Chawton Hill supports clients refurbishing school buildings throughout the process. We aim to provide a consistent approach from early planning through to delivery. Helping to ensure that refurbishment works are completed safely, efficiently, and with minimal disruption to the school environment. If you are planning refurbishment works in a live school setting, early planning and the right support can make a significant difference to both delivery and outcomes.

Speak to Dave and James, who specialise in education projects, or get in touch with the team to find out more.

Eton College



Eton, one of the country's oldest and best known public schools was opened in 1440 by King Henry VI. Henry wanted his subjects to have the opportunities of gaining knowledge that he had enjoyed, and he made provision for 70 poor boys, known as King's Scholars, to be housed and educated at Eton free of charge. Alongside them, other boys could also benefit from the free education, but they would have to pay for their accommodation.

Chawton Hill were appointed as Principal Designer, and Contract Administrator on this project for Eton College to refurbish a large number of ageing windows on two accommodation blocks and staff accomodation.

The original windows were installed by the well-known supplier, Crittall, so we worked with them and contractor, Cravencroft, to maintain the fenestration style and design of the original buildings. The new windows are double glazed, as opposed to the original single-glazed units. This means that the school can benefit from improved energy efficiency while retaining the original period design and look of the buildings.

This project saw the replacement of a number of windows - retaining original design style whilst significantly improving energy efficiency.

St Teresa's Effingham

With over 640 pupils, St. Teresa's is the largest Catholic independent girls' school in the country. The school offers an inclusive environment welcoming students from a range of backgrounds, open to students of all faiths and none.

Core values of faith, character, community, compassion and intellect knit the school together, resulting in an atmosphere of mutual support, vibrancy and kindness.

The Performing Arts Centre, provides state of the art facilities for the expanding and successful music and drama departments at St Teresa's School, Effingham, Surrey.

The Centre provides music rooms, recording suites, music practice, drama studios and a stage lighting and sound effects system.

The building has been designed with a lower ground floor set into the slope of the site. This space is ideally suited for drama and provides access directly to the rear of the stage area for performances and practice sessions.

The Centre has become the focal point for school and community productions throughout the year and provides seating for 750.

The £2.5m project was completed in 52 weeks by R Durtnell and Sons Ltd with Miller Bourne as the novated Architect and Chawton Hill as the employers agent, project manager & principal designer.





The Performing Arts Centre at St Teresas provides a dynamic and flexible space for both school and community productions.

5 Tips for Education Facilities

We are often asked what makes our approach to delivering education facilities so successful? We know from HEAD research by Professor Peter Barrett that great school design helps improve classroom learning by up to 16%. This is something we discussed in this recent post.

However, how do we at Chawton Hill deliver exceptional education facilities?

1. Project Planning

We place paramount importance on getting things right from the start of every commission. This means every project, no matter how big or small must have a project delivery plan. This will ensure our clients know what it is we will be doing for them and when. Our ISO 9001:2015 certification means that we follow set and approved procedures to enhance our service delivery. We aim to ensure all schemes are completed most effectively and consistently possible.

2. Accountability

As members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors we have professional standards of conduct to follow to ensure we avoid conflicts of interest and always provide sound, impartial advice. We are particularly keen to review carefully each project. Did it deliver? Were there areas that could have been improved? Are students and teachers happy with the outcome?
It is by applying this collective knowledge built up over years and hundreds of school design projects, that we are able to offer a specialist solution that minimises risks and maximises value.



3. Procurement of project work

We always tender building projects to a range of contractors to ensure best value for money. The process ensures we have a credible range of figures for discussion. Contractors are selected for their ability to produce good quality work.
They must show sound experience of working within the education sector, and understanding of schools' expectations around project delivery. Issues such as access constraints and working sensitively around occupied school accommodation are key.



5 Tips for Education Facilities

4. Value

You will of course be looking for exceptional value for money. Chawton Hill can provide a range of commercial solutions, including lump sum fee quotations or percentage fees, based on contract values. Our hourly rates reflect our competitive position in the market place and we are flexible in meeting particular requirements of the client.

A school design that is full of natural light, has good air quality, good acoustics, comfortable temperature control and enough space to allow for a range of activities will have a positive outcome on students' results.

However policy can often emphasise quantitative evidence over qualitative. So it was good to find a piece of research conducted by Professor Peter Barrett entitled, Holistic Evidence and Design. Prof. Barrett has put a figure on how the physical characteristics of a classroom impacts the learning progress of pupils.

That figure is 16%. Students in well designed rooms will perform 16% better than those who do not.

There are, of course, many factors that contribute to raising educational attainment in schools, including great teaching. However, this research demonstrates that good learning environments enable both staff and students to give their best.

The independent school sector realises that to differentiate your offering and compete against other fee paying facilities they have to invest in quality. The quality of school design must go beyond baseline specifications.

This is where experience and shared knowledge plays a vital role. The ability to agree an effective brief, maximise value and deliver a solution that all key stakeholders are proud of is what we at Chawton Hill do best.



5. Working Together

We understand the pressures schools are under to be distinctive and maximise scarce resources. Chawton Hill approach projects with an ethos of adaptability, knowing the final outcome is always a development of the initial plan. We work hard to involve all clients in the process, something that our ISO 9001:2015 certification has a measurable effect on. We are particularly keen to review carefully each project – Did it deliver? Were there areas that could have been improved? Are students and teachers happy with the outcome?

By applying this collective knowledge built up over years and hundreds of school design projects, we are able to offer a specialist solution that minimises risks and maximises value.

St Joseph's, Guildford



This project not only provided a new sports area for the school which can be used all year round, but with the addition of new floodlights and other features, it can now be let out as a facility for the community.

We were initially able to help the school team with a feasibility study. We then took on the role of principal designer, contract administrator and project manager

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Guildford already had an existing multi-use games area. This was an old AstroTurf pitch which had come to the end of its life. It needed replacing to improve safety and provide a better facility for the students.

Enabling its use outside teaching hours provides an alternative and helpful revenue source for the school.

The needle-punched artificial grass, Matchplay 2, was provided by leading surface specialist Playrite. The Philips OptiVision LED gen 3.5 floodlighting system was installed by their approved partner Powercor, and H A Marks were the main contractor on the scheme.

The project was completed within budget and was delivered over the school's summer holiday, just in time for the new school year. Thanks to all involved in delivering a great project for St Josephs.

The project not only provides a new sports area for the school, it can now be let out as a facility for the community.

St Andrew’s School

St Andrew’s School was founded in 1937 and is an established, respected and thriving co-educational prep school of around 300 children from the ages of 3 to 13.

The school is set in 11 acres of grounds within a quiet residential area approximately half a mile from Woking town centre in Surrey. St Andrew's is very proud of its excellent facilities and of the beautiful natural environment in which the school is located.

Chawton Hill project managed extensive works at the school which included remodelling the school reception, building a new auditorium, extending the dining facilities and adding a food technology room.

As part of the project, we linked these buildings together to create a free-flowing facility.

Devising an efficient project plan was critical to delivering the development within a live school environment. This included quiet working periods and prohibiting construction deliveries during school drop off/collection times.

Limited site access required the removal of around 15 non-indigenous trees which were replaced with more appropriate local species and a range of measures to improve bio diversity.





This project to provide a remodelled reception and the provision of extensive new facilities required careful planning to minimise disruption to school life.

Solar Power for Schools?

Recent data show that 2024 was the first year with a global average temperature around 1.55°C above pre-industrial levels, with 2025 remaining close to 1.5°C. It seems now that there's no doubt that the climate crisis is here to stay. So is the key question now, how can we limit the potential risks?

One solution is renewable energy.

PV and Solar Options

There are many routes to achieving this, but one popular solution is solar or 'photovoltaic' (PV) energy. Chawton Hill has been working with Powercor on several projects. One of Powercor's specialisms is the installation of PV systems in schools.

There are many advantages to installing PV systems, from providing education opportunities to students, to energy savings or even feed-in tariff revenue from the national grid. But what are the potential costs, risks and key considerations when moving to solar power?

We caught up with Dave from Chawton Hill and Chris from Powercor to find out more...

Chris: What are the benefits of PV systems and how easy are they to maintain?

A big bonus of course is de-carbonisation. Depending on the size of the array (the number and scale of panels fitted) you can often have a surplus of energy for your building. This in turn means you can potentially sell surplus energy to other users or the grid, making it not just a green energy source, but a revenue source too.

Dave: What are the costs of installing panels, and how long does it take to recoup that cost?

With a return on investment of just three years in many cases, the cost can be recouped far more quickly than most other decarbonisation investments.

Certain bodies can also apply for financial support or in some cases funding for energy efficient projects. This means that the capital investment cost can be relatively low.

Chris: Are PV panels truly sustainable? Can you measure the long-term (embodied) carbon cost including the mining of materials to make them, etc?

The carbon trail is a concern, and with it still being early days, things are evolving all the time. Panels generally start life in China, although some come from the US. However, panels generally have a life expectancy of 25 years at least, so it will be some time before life-expired panels are a major concern.
There are already regulations in place for the disposal and recovery of materials in end-of-life panels and we've no doubt that over time, the ability to re-use and recycle materials will improve.



Solar Power for Schools?

Dave: What's your role in the process? How does Chawton Hill add value to the installation of PV panels?

Chawton Hill can help in several ways across the process of panel installation. This starts with feasibility studies and assisting with planning regulations. We also bring access to our wide network of specialist engineers, designers and experts who can help ensure the installation is completed on time, on budget and in compliance with the law. One thing you don't want is to find that you've installed the panels but haven't complied with planning regulations or requirements of your local authority.

Chris: Given the British weather, and the fact that during the 'sunniest' period of the year, schools are closed, can solar energy really be cost-effective?

This is the classic question that comes up regularly. Yes, a lot of schools are shut in the summer, but many do now use their spaces in the summer – summer clubs, staffing activities etc. There may still be a surplus, but we can use that for other things.

St Georges in Weybridge is a good example of a school where the team added £1 million of solar equipment, but now finds ways to use the energy when there's a surplus – car charging, cooling, etc. and as mentioned there's a possibility to earn money by feeding energy back to the grid. Sleeving is one option, where you can sell energy to other partners.

There are many options to ensure the PV panels are still working even if your staff are on holiday. And In fact, though many people associate PV with bright sunshine, they can be very effective in standard daylight. One client had one of their most efficient months in February 2023.

Dave: From experience what do you find the hardest to manage on school projects – how can clients help make the project as successful as possible?

Some of the biggest challenges tend to be around listed buildings.

The risks and challenges here are particularly interesting. Council/conservation officers can then need involvement and things become potentially more complicated and protracted. We've had good levels of success by keeping on top of the latest changes in regulation and ensuring we communicate well with all the parties involved.

Live schools are often a challenge for any construction project and solar panels are no exception. If work is planned for areas that are in use, then the key is trying to ensure we don't interfere with day to day school activities. We also need to deal carefully with logistics of deliveries.

Regulation

Chris also mentions several rules and regulations coming into play, which qualified advisors can assist with. In particular, insurers and the Fire Protection Association have issued RC 62 to tackle the risk of fire associated with panels. These and other considerations need to be taken into account on any PV project.

He talks about the importance of ensuring your systems are working efficiently once installed. The team use a product called "Simble". This connects a range of 'Internet of Things' devices, to provide a one-stop overview of energy performance. The aim is to ensure systems run as efficiently as possible, identifying the benefits of installing PV and other equipment such as low-energy lighting.

Ultimately both feel the opportunities for reducing energy usage, feeding energy into the grid and benefitting from solar power are set to expand in the years ahead.

Aldro School

Aldro is a day and boarding school for approximately 180 children aged between 7 and 13.

The Limes and Clockhouse buildings are two Grade II listed dwellings dating back, in part, to 1743. They are set within the grounds of the Aldro school in Shackleford, Surrey.

The Cottages are situated within the curtilage of Aldro. Both the Limes and Clockhouse cottages are in the Shackleford Conservation Area and are Grade II listed. These properties were originally a stable block and coach house to the main house, which later became Aldro.

Following the appointment of a new Headteacher, it was decided that the Limes and Clockhouse buildings should be converted to a single dwelling to provide accommodation for the Headteacher and his family.

Chawton Hill were commissioned to provide design, contract administration and project management services for the refurbishment and internal layout alterations from inception through to completion.

Chawton Hill worked closely with the local authority Conservation Officer to ensure that the finished development did not detract from the significance of the original listed buildings.

Amongst other works, the project included the creation of a new opening between the Clockhouse and Limes Cottages. Additionally, removal of the bathroom in Limes Cottage and construction of a new bathroom within Clockhouse Cottage.

It also included the construction of a new wall to create a Public Function Space at ground floor in Limes cottage

The finished Grade II Listed conversion project was successfully completed whilst meeting the aspirations of the school and within the latest building regulations and listed building consent.





The finished Grade II listed conversion met the aspirations of the school, whilst complying with building regs and planning consent.

Moor Lane Respite Centre

Though not involved in the early stages of the project, Chawton Hill supported stakeholders and client to bring it to completion.

In the original works, precise user requirements at Moor Lane weren't captured. Chawton Hill worked with the end user and stakeholders, to deliver a solution that met the requirements of all involved. We spent time with stakeholders to redefine the project brief, ensuring that the finished project would meet their needs.

The result is a useful and vibrant, purpose-built overnight respite facility in Chessington. The building will provide short break care for children and young people who may have multiple disabilities. Often they will also have complex medical needs and challenging behaviour.

The centre provides a vital link in the support of families with additional care needs. In addition to respite care, it hosts summer holiday clubs. The centre provides a range of activities for children with special educational and care needs.

We were pleased to engage in some great collaboration between our clients, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, the end-user – Achieving for Children, and Cravencroft – the project contractors.

Particular detail we brought to the project included external turfing works, fencing and playground detail. We also added external ramps for wheelchairs and some minor alterations internally.



Common Building Issues in Schools & How Early Interventions Help Prevent Them

School buildings are busy places. From classrooms and halls to kitchens and sports facilities, they are in constant use. Many schools are also working with older buildings that were built decades ago. As with many older buildings, design or material often only become apparent over time.

While some building issues are expected with age. Many of the most common and costly problems in schools can be reduced or avoided entirely with early surveys and planned maintenance.

Common Building Issues in Schools

Roofs and Water

Leaking roofs are one of the most frequent problems in schools. Small issues such as slipped tiles, damaged roof flashings or blocked gutters can lead to internal leaks, water damage to ceilings, and disruption to lessons. Damp and mould can follow, creating unhealthy environments and increasing long-term repair costs.

Hidden Defects in Older Buildings

Many school buildings were constructed in the mid-20th century when different construction materials and methods were common. One example of this is reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete, or RAAC, a lightweight material widely used in schools between the 1950s and 1990s. In 2024, 234 schools had been identified as having RAAC, of which 119 needed extensive work to remove it. In September 2025, the Government stated that 60% of these were either “fully free” of RAAC or “on the path to removal”.

At Chawton Hill we have had direct experience supporting clients where RAAC has been identified. At Camberly theatre, RAAC planks were discovered within the roof structure. We supported the client through the investigation and helped deliver a solution that allowed the theatre to reopen safely.

Heating, Ventilation and Temperature Control Issues

Older heating systems and poor ventilation often make classrooms too cold in winter and too hot in summer. Teachers have reported broken boilers, overheated classrooms and frozen conditions that impact learning. Issues with heating and ventilation are often closely linked to how energy efficient a building is. At Chawton Hill we work with schools to identify improvements that help classrooms stay warmer in winter and cooler in summer. This includes looking at how buildings perform day to day and advising on changes that are realistic for school budgets and buildings.

Wear and Tear in High-Use Areas

Everyday use has its effect on doors, windows, floors and external areas. If issues like rotten



Common Building Issues in Schools & How Early Interventions Help Prevent Them

window frames, worn bricks or broken doors are not spotted early, they can affect safety and accessibility over time. We have supported a number of schools with window and rooflight replacement projects.

Examples where Chawton Hill have helped clients on these issues include St Luke's CofE Primary School in Kingston, where the rooflights were replaced from small to large to enhance natural sunlight. Also at Nescot college, where window replacements improved the overall thermal performance of the building.

Compliance and Safety Risks

Schools must meet current safety standards. Hidden hazards such as damaged fire doors, outdated electrical systems or poorly maintained access routes can pose risks if they are not identified early in a condition survey.

Current Examples from the UK

The condition of many school buildings in England has attracted national attention in recent years. National Audit Office (NAO) report estimates that 700,000 pupils learn in buildings needing major repairs, some with critical safety risks like asbestos or Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). Leading to learning being disrupted, despite government funding for rebuilding and refurbishment programs like the School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) that have been put in place to help reduce the negative impact on their learning experience.

Surveys of educators have also highlighted how widespread everyday issues have become. A 2024 survey of over 8,000 members of the National Education Union (NEU) in England and Wales highlights severe and widespread issues with school building conditions:

- Leaking Roofs: 68% of teachers reported that their buildings leaked when it rained.
- Mould and Damp: 45% of respondents reported issues with mould or damp in their schools.
- Temperature Extremes: 33% of teachers reported that their classrooms are "severely overheated" in the summer, while 16% described them as severely cold in the winter.

Some schools have faced particularly serious structural issues. Buildings constructed under fast-track programmes, including CLASP and other system-build methods, were later found to have significant defects. In some cases, this led to temporary school closures, demolition and full replacement through the School Rebuilding Programme.

CLASP buildings were prefabricated using a steel frame, with asbestos boards added for fire protection. There are around 1,644 of these buildings still in use across England. Over time, many have proven vulnerable to deterioration and damage. While some local authorities replaced them, others did not, leaving ongoing safety and maintenance challenges.

How Early Surveys Help

Early building surveys give a clear picture of a school's condition before problems escalate. Rather than reacting to failures, estates teams can plan with confidence and make informed decisions based on evidence.

Surveys help identify issues at an early stage, when repairs are usually simpler and more cost effective. They support planned maintenance instead of emergency works, reduce disruption

Common Building Issues in Schools & How Early Interventions Help Prevent Them

to pupils and staff, and allow schools to budget more accurately for future repairs. Early intervention can also extend the life of a building.

For example, a survey might identify early signs of roof deterioration or moisture ingress that can be addressed through targeted repairs. Without this, the same issue could develop into a failure requiring urgent works, temporary closures, or costly replacements.

Long-Term Planning

A well-timed survey does more than highlight immediate concerns. It helps schools understand what may need attention over the coming years. This allows works to be prioritised and aligned with funding cycles, as well as opportunities such as applying Condition Improvement Funding. This forward planning is particularly important where funding is limited and competition for grants is high.

An Inclusive Approach

Every school is different. Building age, construction type, use and budget all play a role. Surveys should be clear, practical and focused on real solutions rather than technical language.

By investing in early surveys and planned maintenance, schools can protect their buildings, manage costs more effectively and provide safer environments for learning.

Conclusion

Many common building issues in schools develop gradually and can often be avoided with early surveys and planned maintenance. Identifying problems early allows schools to plan confidently, manage budgets, and reduce disruption to pupils and staff.



Nescot College

We were delighted to work again with our friends at Nescot College Surrey. We have been helping them prepare an application bid to fund a new Animal Care Unit (ACU).

Chawton Hill have an extensive history with Nescot. Projects we've supported have included the development of an integrated learning hub for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) students. We also supported the later construction of an extra annexe at the college.

New Project

Most recently, we have been working with Nescot to prepare a bid for the expansion of their existing animal care unit (ACU). As part of our initial project management support for this scheme, we have assisted in several elements. These included preparing budget cost estimates, cash flow forecasts, project programme, and provisional design and layout of the site.

If funding is successful, we look forward to supporting the team at Nescot in the administration and management of their next project.

All land-based courses at Nescot take place in purpose-built facilities around the main campus building. Including the Animal Care Centre, more than half of the College's space is dedicated to supporting student studies. The college is home to a range of exotic, agricultural and domestic animals.

New Unit

The intention is for a further modular unit to be built to accommodate more students. It will also allow a wider range of vocational courses in animal husbandry.

The proposal includes two large classrooms, office space, cleaning facilities and a nocturnal animal room. We wish the team at Nescot every success and we look forward to working with them on the next stage of their project.



Shrewsbury House School

Every single project in the built environment comes with its own challenges. Schools in particular, require careful thought. We often have to plan work and activities around many competing needs, usually ensuring that disruption to the school's working day is kept to a minimum.

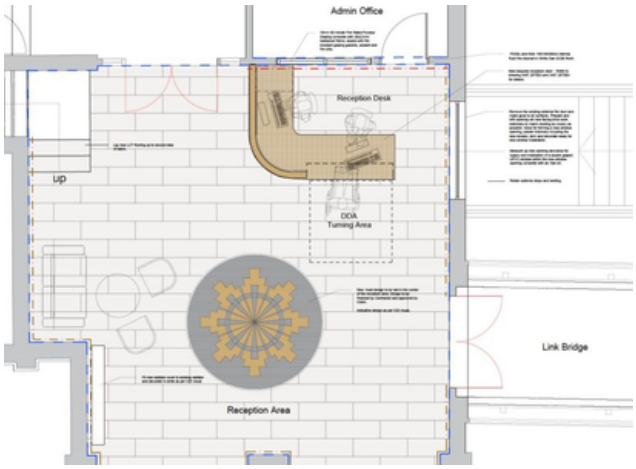
Shrewsbury House School in Surbiton was founded in 1865 by a local clergyman. It moved in 1910 to 'Haulkerton' a large Victorian Arts and Crafts mansion that dated from the mid-nineteenth century. It was a privilege to work with such a prestigious client to bring their reception into the 21st Century.

The school had a desire to refresh their reception area, to make it more appealing to visitors and generally refresh the area.

The challenge was to meet this brief, whilst at the same time keeping within the client's budget and ensure a good quality result.

There were also a number of other considerations, such as the requirements of the Equality Act, visitor circulation, etc.

One key feature of the project was the reception desk. The client already had a standard desk, but wanted something more appealing. Using our knowledge of suppliers and sources, we were able to arrange for a desk to be custom-made. This provides the room with a classy appearance, whilst maintaining all of the client and regulatory requirements.







CHAWTON HILL CHARTERED SURVEYORS

chawtonhill.com

01372 360663

info@chawtonhill.com