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Gerflor Evolves its 40 year Taraflex® sport floor hall legacy

When Ashington Academy's sports hall required updating, the school decided to replace its existing Gerflor Taraflex® sport flooring with a 'like-for-like' Gerflor flooring as the floor, which was still fit-for-purpose, was a little jaded after four decades of demanding use.

Ashington Academy, Ashington, Northumberland, opened in 1960 as Ashington Grammar to become a comprehensive school in the seventies and a foundation school as part of Ashington Learning Partnership in 2007. With its own land, buildings and staff, it was one of the first educational trusts in the country and is now sponsored by the North East Learning Trust.

A secondary school for the education of 11-18 year olds, the Academy has an extensive sports curriculum as well as a thriving programme of extra-curricular activities. These include a wide variety of sporting opportunities for students of all abilities, with many students becoming qualified sports leaders through the Junior, Community and Higher Sports Leadership Awards. These awards aim to develop life and employability skills in young people.

Given Ashington Academy's prominent sporting agenda, it turned yet again to Gerflor for a reliable, replacement flooring solution for its hall that is solely used for indoor sporting activities like badminton, sprinting, hockey, basketball and five-a-side football.

"I could see the benefits of using the same flooring again instead of changing it," said Andrew Crosby, (Head of Estates, Ashington Academy), who is in charge of the maintenance of all the North East Learning Trusts' buildings. "After all we'd had the floor in use for over 40 years and hadn't had to replace it and that's world class!"

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As international flooring specialist Gerflor continually invests in on-going product development, it not only introduces new product innovations but also regularly improves and expands established brands like Taraflex®. As a result, Taraflex® Evolution, which features a new double density CXP HD foam technology for the greater comfort and protection of players, was the natural replacement for the original 40 year old flooring at Ashington Academy.

Taraflex® Evolution is a high performance P1 category point elastic, 7.5mm thick, cushioned sports flooring, which is fully compliant with EN Standard 14904 and ideal for multi-use halls used by all ages. Point elastic vinyl floorings are designed to provide shock absorbency and impact resistance, which are not related by weight-related performance like some other indoor sports surfaces.

Due to its advanced construction, Taraflex® Evolution offers optimum levels of durability, safety and comfort: Its D-Max™ fibre-glass grid reinforcement gives superior indentation, abrasion and heavy loads' resistance, while its built-in, Triple Action Protoscol® surface treatment provides easy maintenance and a surer foothold with anti-bacterial and fungicidal treatments for maximum hygiene. And last, but not least, its wide range of designs and colours give plenty of aesthetic scope for updating sports facilities.

The durability of Taraflex® Evolution was also of great significance to Ashington Academy, as Andrew Crosby explains: "As the sport and physical activity that takes place in the hall is so varied, correspondingly so is the equipment used. It is therefore of enormous benefit to us that the regular transit of items like crash mats, mobile goals and nets on and off the surface can take place without damage to the floor."

However, when it came to installing the new flooring at Ashington Academy, project flooring contractor, Newcastle Flooring Company Ltd, discovered that the sub floor beneath was extremely damp. Subsequently a DPM was installed before 800 sqm of Taraflex® Evolution in colour, Blue, could be laid.

"Although the floor was significantly damp underneath, it hadn't affected the original Taraflex® flooring, which had not moved," said Joseph Buzzeo, Managing Director, Newcastle Flooring Company. "Whenever we need a sports floor, Taraflex® is our 'go-to' product as you can't beat it.

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Over the years we have not experienced any problems with the product and we always get the back-up of technical support and required delivery from Gerflor. We were therefore very happy to supply the school with samples of Taraflex® Evolution, which met the same specification as the previous floor. They opted for a different colour alongside the hall improvements.”

Taraflex® Evolution’s durability and low maintenance attributes have also been highly beneficial to the school: “Gerflor’s sports flooring does not require stripping or re-lacquering and only needs routine cleaning,” said Andrew Crosby. “It is therefore economical for us to maintain in comparison to some other floor types with the same levels of multi-use performance. The overall cost efficiencies, life cycle replacement and general maintenance costs, including a low overall life cycle cost per square metre of flooring, is what we look for today.”

“As far as I am aware there is no history at the school of repeat or re-bound muscle strains, accidents or incidents that could be attributed to the floor. We must therefore assume that Taraflex® is an outstanding solution which continues to perform.” concluded Andrew Crosby.

For more information about Gerflor solutions, order a free sample or to speak to a specialist call 01926 622600 / email: contractuk@gerflor.com or visit www.gerflor.co.uk

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