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PORTAKABIN WELCOMES GOVERNMENT'S MOVE TOWARDS OFF-SITE CONSTRUCTION FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS BUT CALLS FOR CHANGE IN PERCEPTIONS

***Portakabin*, the UK's leading modular building specialist, has welcomed the Government's move towards off-site construction as a procurement solution following the Education Capital Review.**

***Portakabin* is also calling for a change in thinking among some contractors, architects and schools to help address any reluctance to embrace the opportunities and efficiency improvements that off-site construction can bring.**

The advantages of steel-framed modular buildings have been well documented over recent years – programme times can be halved with a direct, positive impact on children's education, and there is much less disruption to teaching when an existing school is extended. There are also clear sustainability and performance benefits – waste and vehicle movements can be reduced by up to 90 per cent and thermal efficiency is improved for lower running costs.

However, there is still the erroneous perception among some schools, local authorities and the architectural and construction community that modular buildings mean sub-standard teaching accommodation. The reality is that there is an infinite variety of aesthetic, layout and fitting out options to create school buildings that can genuinely inspire – whilst reducing procurement time.

David Shaw, a Director of *Portakabin*, comments, "Having contributed to the Government's review of procurement practice to find a new way of delivering school and academy construction, it is clear that off-site solutions can help to dramatically improve efficiency and reduce cost – but without compromising the standards of education."

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“Many schools, local authorities and contractors already share our vision for delivering really exciting school buildings – that happen to be built in a factory, but can exceed the highest specification ‘bespoke’ buildings in terms of performance and the quality of the teaching environment.”

“However, we still need a shift in perceptions among some architects, contractors and schools to help drive the changes forward – and to help get the best out of off-site solutions. We believe it is essential that teaching staff, governors, and parents have the opportunity to talk to and visit other schools with high quality permanent modular solutions already in use, to experience just what’s possible. We want to work closely with staff and pupils to explain how the buildings will be used and their advantages.”

“Our modular buildings already feature many inherent benefits such as space, proportion, robustness and high levels of natural light to create stimulating education environments with a sense of presence and identity for each school. Delivered with significantly less disruption to teaching, this is an excellent and affordable solution without compromise.”

“As the pioneer in the UK’s off-site construction sector, we are keen to work with more architects to further improve aesthetics and continue to push the boundaries of design and innovation.”

Portakabin can deliver complete new schools or extensions to existing buildings, for both interim and permanent use, and with a proven, positive impact on education standards.

The solutions are highly flexible and can be applied to learning clusters, standalone teaching blocks and even single classroom buildings to meet a school’s precise requirements. They incorporate design best practice, such as anti-bullying strategies, and meet or exceed current Department for Education guidelines.

For further information about *Portakabin* school buildings, visit

www.portanews.co.uk, email information@portakabin.co.uk or call 0845 401 0010.

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Editor's Notes

1. *Portakabin* has the reassurance of independent accreditations which include Buying Solutions – the Government's procurement scheme; ISO 9001 for quality assurance, ISO 14001 for environmental performance, as well as Zurich, BBA, LABC, and CE approvals for its modular buildings.
2. *Portakabin* modular buildings offer a range of advantages over site-based construction, including:
 - Faster response and programme times reduced by up to 50 per cent
 - Improved health and safety
 - Consistent delivery on time and on budget – *Portakabin* has completed 99.9 per cent of projects on time and on budget in the past year, significantly exceeding construction industry averages
 - The reassurance of a ground-breaking Customer Charter and warranty package – unique in the industry
 - Highly flexible and innovative accommodation solutions, such as *Ultima Vision* – a fully glazed modular building available for hire, and *Titan* – the largest single modular building in Europe
 - Enhanced quality and a steel-framed construction.
3. *Portakabin* is a registered trademark.
4. If you wish to publish a telephone number for further information, the number for *Portakabin* is **0845 401 0010**. Please do not print the agency's number.

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