

# ACADEMY GROUNDS AND LEARNING



*Helping academies make the most of their outdoor areas, whatever the weather.*



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Installed at an Academy in Cumbria

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Planning Ahead for Spring and  
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Facilities

*"We recently had a canopy fitted within our Reception setting at Sheep Dip Lane Academy. Wonderful service from start to finish even working during term time safely and following full safeguarding. We are now budgeting for a second canopy."*

Sheep Dip Lane Academy,  
South Yorkshire

Brought to you by Able Canopies

[www.ablecanopies.co.uk](http://www.ablecanopies.co.uk)

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0800 389 9072



# EDITOR'S WELCOME

Hello and welcome to our very first edition of *Academy Grounds and Learning*; our brand-new bi-annual newsletter designed specifically for UK academies.

Within this newsletter, you will find a selection of articles to give you inspiration for transforming your outdoor areas along with ideas you can incorporate into your outdoor lessons and outdoor play, and the latest

funding news to help you fund your outdoor projects.

So take a break, sit back, relax with a cuppa and have a read. Hopefully you'll be able to take some ideas back to the classroom.

If you enjoy reading, feel free to leave a copy in your staffroom for your colleagues to enjoy too. If they would like to receive their own copies, head to

[www.ablecanopies.co.uk/newsletter](http://www.ablecanopies.co.uk/newsletter) and we'll add them to the list.

I hope you find lot's of inspiration you can use for the rest of winter and going into spring, we'll be back in the summer for more.

Best Wishes

*Christine Vaughan-Chatfield*  
Editor



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# ACADEMIES LOVE THE CONISTON CANOPY

Here's Why:



Excellent Solar  
Gain Properties



Rust Resistant  
Aluminium Frame



Available in Any  
RAL colour



Excellent Fire  
Rating



Blocks Over 98%  
of UV Rays



Unlimited Length  
& up to 11.5m  
Projection



Wall Mounted &  
Free Standing  
Options



Vandal & Shatter  
Resistant  
Roof Panels



To explore the Coniston further scan the QR code below or visit:  
[www.ablecanopies.co.uk/coniston](http://www.ablecanopies.co.uk/coniston)





## CASE STUDY

# Dining Canopy Installation at Workington Academy

Extending dining capacity with an all-weather outdoor dining space for students



## Client Needs

Workington Academy required a canopy outside their dining area to cover approx. 30m x 5m. They were looking for the best value canopy that would stand up to the rigours of a secondary school environment and encourage their students to enjoy their lunch outside.







## Our Solution

Upon discovering they require a canopy to cover an outdoor dining area, we suggested the Stepped Coniston Freestanding Canopy to create a large canopy with the total dimensions of 10m x 22m to cover a whopping 220 square meters.

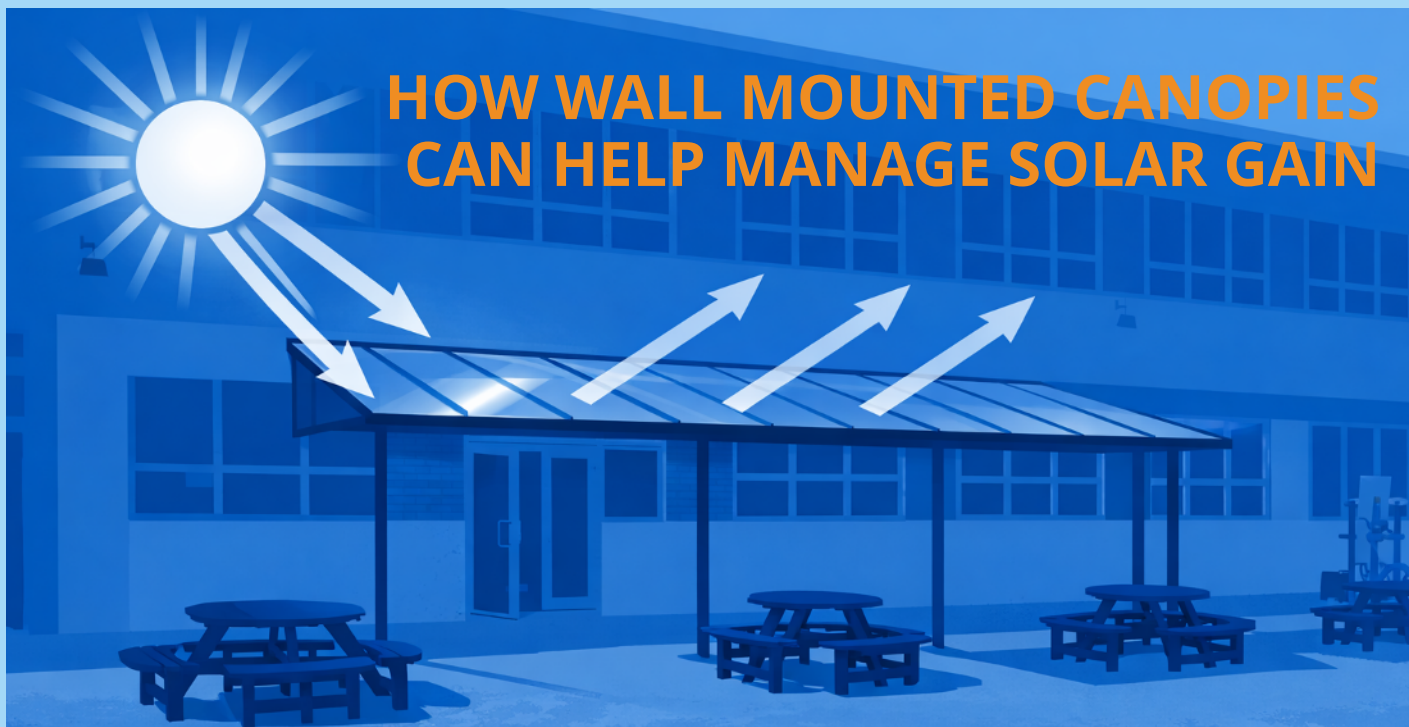


## The Results

Workington Academy's requirements were successfully met with the installation of their outdoor dining canopy, providing a spacious and sheltered area where students and staff can comfortably dine outdoors throughout the year. The canopy also covers the academy's food pod, offering additional weather protection and enhancing overall usability.







## HOW WALL MOUNTED CANOPIES CAN HELP MANAGE SOLAR GAIN

Excessive solar gain in classrooms is a common challenge for schools, particularly in buildings with large glazed areas. When direct sunlight enters a classroom, internal temperatures rise quickly, often leading to discomfort for pupils and staff and increased reliance on air conditioning or additional heating.

Wall mounted canopies provide an effective solution by shading windows and glazed façades before sunlight reaches the glass. By blocking direct sunlight, they help regulate internal temperatures, reduce glare, and create a more comfortable learning environment throughout the school day.

Modern canopy systems also offer high levels of UV protection, helping

to protect classroom furniture, flooring, and equipment from sun damage.

In addition, our Coniston canopy roof panels feature thermal properties that diffuse light rather than allowing harsh sunlight to penetrate the classroom, maintaining natural daylight without excessive heat.

By reducing solar gain, wall mounted canopies can lower energy consumption. Classrooms remain cooler during warmer months, reducing the need for air conditioning, while improved temperature stability supports more efficient heating during colder periods.

Over time, this can contribute to noticeable savings on energy bills which is particularly important for academies managing tight budgets.

Beyond thermal performance, wall mounted canopies also provide weather protection for entrances and circulation areas, enhance building appearance, and support sustainability goals through passive temperature control.

Our canopies are perfect for academies looking to improve classroom comfort, reduce energy costs, and create more resilient learning environments, wall mounted canopies offer a practical, long-term solution.

### Reducing Energy Bills and Improving Energy Efficiency

One of the key advantages of installing wall mounted canopies is the impact on energy consumption.

#### By reducing solar gain:

- Classrooms stay cooler naturally during warmer months
- The need for air conditioning and portable cooling units is reduced
- Heating systems work more efficiently due to improved temperature regulation
- Overall electricity and heating costs are lowered

For multi-academy trusts managing multiple sites, these savings can add up to a significant reduction in annual energy spend.



# IN NEED OF FUNDS FOR YOUR NEXT PROJECT?

Download your free funding guide which is packed with grants to help you fund your next outdoor project.



To download now, scan the QR code or visit:  
**[www.ablecanopies.co.uk/funding](http://www.ablecanopies.co.uk/funding)**

## HELPING ACADEMIES UNLOCK OUTDOOR IMPROVEMENT FUNDING

With six major grants listed, plus tips for applying and securing your grant, this free funding guide is a must-have for all UK Academies.



Education-focused funding



Helpful guidance



Practical steps

## WHAT WILL YOU DISCOVER?

- ✓ Six major grants
- ✓ 10 tips to secure your grant
- ✓ Access to many more funding opportunities
- ✓ An introduction to match-funding
- ✓ And more...

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# CREATING HEALTHIER LUNCHTIMES: THE VALUE OF COVERED OUTDOOR DINING IN ACADEMIES

Outdoor dining is becoming an increasingly valuable feature for academies across the UK. As education providers continue to prioritise pupil wellbeing, space efficiency, and flexible use of outdoor areas, covered outdoor dining spaces offer a practical and highly beneficial solution.

One of the primary advantages of outdoor dining is its positive impact on pupil wellbeing. Fresh air and natural light contribute to improved mood, reduced stress, and better concentration. Enabling students to eat outdoors provides a change of environment from the classroom, supporting mental wellbeing and encouraging social interaction in a more relaxed setting. This can be particularly beneficial during busy school days, helping pupils return to lessons feeling refreshed.

Outdoor dining areas also help academies maximise the use of their available space. By creating covered dining areas outside, schools can reduce pressure on indoor halls and canteens, especially during peak lunch periods.

This additional capacity can improve crowd management, reduce noise levels indoors, and

create a more comfortable dining experience for students and staff alike.

Weather protection is a key consideration when planning outdoor dining facilities. This is where high-quality canopy solutions play a vital role.

Our commercial canopies are designed to provide reliable shelter from rain, wind, and excessive sun, allowing outdoor dining areas to be used throughout the year rather than only in favourable weather. By reducing direct sun exposure, canopies also help manage solar gain on adjacent buildings, supporting more comfortable internal temperatures.

In particular, the Tarnhow glulam timber canopy range is ideally suited for creating covered outdoor dining areas and are particularly popular within educational environments.

Manufactured using durable, pressure-treated timber, the Tarnhow range offers a natural, warm aesthetic that complements school surroundings while maintaining the strength and longevity required for commercial use.

Glulam timber canopies are especially popular with academies looking to create welcoming, inclusive spaces that

blend seamlessly with landscaped outdoor areas.

The Tarnhow range can be tailored to suit a wide variety of layouts, whether covering picnic benches, seating areas, or purpose-built dining zones. Its robust construction ensures long-term performance, while the option to integrate roofing materials such as polycarbonate allows natural light to filter through without exposing pupils to harsh weather conditions.

Beyond dining, covered outdoor spaces created with the Tarnhow Glulam Timber Canopy can also be used for socialising, quiet time, or informal learning, further increasing their value to the academy. This flexibility makes timber dining canopies a cost-effective investment that supports both operational needs and pupil experience.

In summary, outdoor dining offers academies clear benefits in terms of wellbeing, space management, and flexibility. With thoughtfully designed canopy solutions such as Able Canopies' Tarnhow Glulam timber canopy range, academies can create attractive, durable, and practical covered dining areas that enhance the school environment, are cost-effective and less time consuming than extensions and can be enjoyed throughout the year.



# INTRODUCING TARNHOW TIMBER CANOPIES FOR OUTDOOR DINING

The Tarnhow Glulam timber canopy range by Able Canopies features five striking, stylish shade and shelter structures that are perfect for outdoor dining within academies as well as outdoor classrooms, events shelters, MUGA canopies and much more.

## Why Invest in a Timber Canopy from Able Canopies?

- ✓ Choice of attractive curved & linear designs
- ✓ All year round protection
- ✓ High UV protection against UV rays
- ✓ Constructed from glulam timber, sourced from PEFC Accredited Timber Merchants
- ✓ The Glulam timber frame is fire resistant to BS 5268
- ✓ Vandal and shatter resistant polycarbonate roofing
- ✓ Approved Glulam Timber – Complies with the requirements of British Standard BS EN 386: 2001



### FIND OUT MORE

Discover the Tarnhow timber canopy range now, scan the QR code or visit:

[www.ablecanopies.co.uk/timber](http://www.ablecanopies.co.uk/timber)





# Planning Ahead for Spring and Summer

## *Investing in Outdoor Facilities for Academies*



As academies begin planning for the spring and summer terms, now is the ideal time to review outdoor facilities and consider how they can best support pupils, staff, and the wider school community. With budgets being set well in advance, early planning allows schools to make informed, cost-effective decisions that deliver long-term value.

Outdoor spaces play an increasingly important role in modern education. From breaktimes and outdoor learning to dining and social interaction, well-designed external areas help schools maximise space usage while supporting wellbeing, behaviour, and engagement.

## Budget Planning for Outdoor Improvements

When allocating budgets for the new financial year, outdoor facilities should be viewed as a strategic investment rather than a short-term expense. High-quality outdoor structures can:

- Extend the usability of playgrounds and dining areas throughout the year
- Reduce pressure on internal space during peak times
- Support curriculum delivery through outdoor learning
- Enhance the overall appearance and functionality of the school site

Planning early also gives academies the opportunity to explore phased installations, secure competitive pricing, and ensure projects are delivered during quieter periods such as school holidays.



*" Outdoor facilities should be viewed as a long-term investment, not a short-term cost. "*



# Why Canopies Are a Smart Investment for Schools

A professionally installed canopy is one of the most versatile and cost-effective additions to any school environment. Designed to provide reliable shelter from rain, wind, and sun, canopies allow outdoor areas to be used safely and comfortably in all seasons.

## Key benefits of school canopies include:

- **All-weather protection** – enabling year-round use of playgrounds and outdoor dining spaces
- **Improved pupil wellbeing** – providing shade during warmer months and shelter during wet weather
- **Flexible usage** – suitable for play, learning, queuing, performances, and social spaces
- **Long-term durability** – commercial-grade structures designed for daily school use

For outdoor dining areas in particular, canopies help manage space more efficiently by allowing pupils to eat outside comfortably, easing congestion in dining halls and improving the lunchtime experience.

## Supporting Future-Focused School Environments

As academies continue to adapt to changing needs, outdoor facilities that offer flexibility and longevity are essential. Canopies can be tailored to suit individual layouts, age groups, and aesthetic requirements, ensuring they integrate seamlessly with existing buildings and grounds.

By incorporating canopy installations into spring and summer planning, schools can make the most of their outdoor spaces while ensuring budgets are spent on solutions that deliver lasting impact.

If you would like further information on how a canopy could enhance your playground or outdoor dining area, early discussions can help ensure your project is planned, budgeted, and delivered efficiently-ready for the warmer months ahead. Contact us today on **0800 389 9072**, or email **[sales@ablecanopies.co.uk](mailto:sales@ablecanopies.co.uk)**





# Able Canopies: The Canopy Experts



Canopies &  
Covered  
Walkways

Cycle &  
Waiting  
Shelters

Shade Sails  
& Tensile  
Structures

Awnings &  
Playground  
Accessories

External  
Works:  
Surfacing,  
Fencing etc.

Able Canopies are the canopy experts. We provide safe and stylish weather protection that transforms outside spaces.

- Every year we complete hundreds of successful school canopy installations across the UK
- These canopies provide schools with effective shelter & areas for outdoor learning and dining
- We also work with universities and the retail, leisure & hospitality sectors to effectively transform outside space
- Our team of canopy experts work with schools, architects & contractors to ensure on time, on budget, project completion
- To ensure consistent high quality we control the design, manufacture & installation process of our canopies

***"Absolutely outstanding from start to finish. The contractors working on site were very polite and professional in their job."***

***Would recommend you and this contractor to anyone."***

- Purple Oaks Academy,  
Northamptonshire

**If you would like a canopy, shelter or shade sail quotation, contact us today:**

**Call:** 0800 389 9072 | **Email:** [sales@ablecanopies.co.uk](mailto:sales@ablecanopies.co.uk)