

# Bedford-Copenhagen Learning Exchange

B2 Group Visit: 21<sup>st</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> September 2014

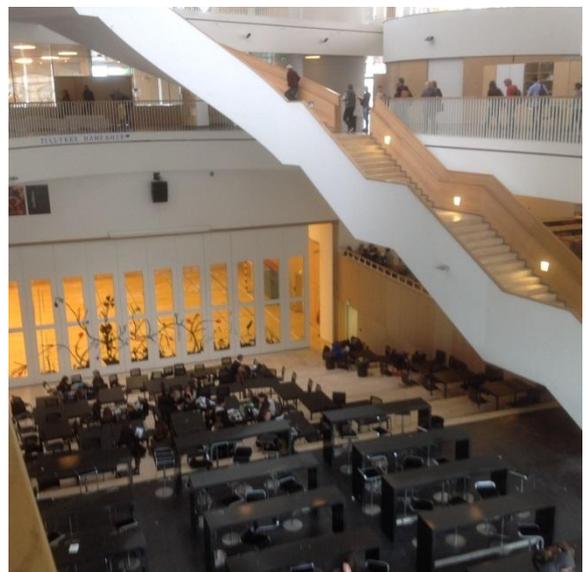
## Orestad Gymnasium (6th Form College)

As you approach the Gymnasium the first thing that strikes you is the architecture - from the outside the building is merely eye catching and impressive but once inside the design is simply stunning - with an interior which is planned around sweeping central stairways (see below) leading up to five floors of classrooms and lecture halls.



The ground floor, as well housing a spacious cafeteria and staff offices, also overlooks a full size basement sports hall. The other floors combine open learning environments - to facilitate group based activities and project based independent learning - with small glass walled classrooms (so all lessons are visible all of the time) and intriguingly the glass walls are often used as an additional 'whiteboard' for the teacher. On the day we toured the classroom walls were covered in mathematical equations and diagrams. We also saw the most attractive and efficient set of student lockers I'd ever seen! The Gymnasium buildings are open between 8.00 until 4.00 each day and the study areas remain open after the lessons end.

The school is very unusual - it is the only one like this in Denmark and was opened in 2006. It is the equivalent to our Sixth Form College - offering sixteen year old students three year courses which are the equivalent to our A levels, In Denmark, school is compulsory until students reach sixteen at which point they need to choose from a range of training or educational providers. Surprisingly, there are no formal entry qualifications to enable students to access these courses and the college deliberately has an 'open door' policy. Instead, students are offered guidance on which might be the most appropriate courses for them to follow at sixteen but the 11 study pathways offered here are mainly academic. However, the college does have a waiting list so not all who want to go there get places...



The Gymnasium boasts four kinds of learning environment (in addition to a roof top skate boarding park - how cool is that?: - their unique see through classrooms, circular lecture theatres, open group working spaces and an individual study centre. Perhaps not surprisingly, ICT is central to the learning experience and the college uses Google as a learning platform to enable sharing of learning resources and virtual learning which is accessed through a mixture of 'bring your own' devices and college iPads based on wireless networks... Academic self-discipline is vital to enable this learning culture to be established and maintained - and even our relentlessly optimistic Danish colleagues admit that this remains their biggest challenge!



At the end of their course only 40% go to university and the majority go on to study vocational qualifications at technical, health or business colleges. About 10% who leave the Gymnasium do not go onto additional study.

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