

BETT: Wednesday 9 January 2008
Olympia Two - Future Schools launch
Transforming education in the 21st century
Tim Byles

1. Thank you all for coming along to Future Schools, the first dedicated area at BETT to focus on 21st century learning. Thanks should also go to Emap for masterminding this brand new strand at BETT encouraging interaction between a range of stakeholders: the construction industry, local authorities, project managers, ICT providers, educationalists - something which mirrors the partnership approach which is at the heart of Building Schools for the Future.
2. For those of you only just getting back into the swing of things since the festive break, we are now in 2008 and hurtling towards the completion of the first decade of this new century.
3. It has been a decade when we have seen education play a key role in national and in local government education policies; a decade when we have seen a number of changes to the way teachers teach and students learn with the growth of personalised and lifelong learning; and for my own organisation - Partnerships for Schools – it was the decade in which we were established to oversee Building Schools for the Future, the biggest strategic capital investment in education we have ever seen, and the most ambitious project to transform education since Queen Victoria was on the throne.
4. To officially launch the Future Schools area here at BETT 2008, I am going to talk today about:
 - what we mean by transforming education;
 - the importance of good design and the role of ICT in the Building Schools for the Future programme;
 - how headteachers and pupils are already responding to BSF;
 - before closing with some thoughts on what 2008 holds for our programme nationwide.

Some background to the programme

5. It is a sobering fact that only around 14% of our school buildings have been built since 1976. That means around millions of pupils are being taught in school buildings from the 1950s, 60s or early 70s – some even older. These buildings were expected to have a design life of around 35 years at most. But young people today are still receiving their secondary education in buildings where their parents, maybe even grandparents, sat in rows of desks as they took their CSEs or O levels.
6. Teaching and learning — and the world – has moved on since those days. When I was at school the thought of having IT lessons, let alone using computers in every lesson, seemed like the stuff of science fiction. We can debate – and the newspapers are often full of such debate – whether the teaching and learning styles of yesteryear had

elements which are more or less successful than today's pedagogical methods. But the truth is that these schools were built for a very different kind of education in a very different world.

7. We no longer expect, or want, our children to sit at one desk within the same four walls. We champion interaction and discussion; we encourage a variety of ways to learn from individual tasks to large group working. And as a recent snapshot of the gadget-life of youngsters showed that 77% of 11 to 16 year olds are online every day – 93% of them saying they use the computer to help with their homework - we aspire to the innovative use of IT. Not only in the tried and tested core subjects but in sport and fitness, art and music.
8. Building Schools for the Future is therefore about much more than simply replacing old with new. If that were the case, my job would be a much easier one. Instead the challenge we face is to find a new solution, a 21st century solution, to providing 3,500 new or remodelled secondary schools in England so that 3.3 million students can turn up to safer, more welcoming, better resourced learning environments; so that the teaching profession has a workplace which encourages them to be the most inspirational teachers they can be; and so that schools reclaim their place at the heart of every community, a vibrant and cherished facility used well beyond the school day.

Facts and figures

9. It's easy to use phrases like 'unprecedented', 'unique' or 'innovative' but harder to back up with real substance. This isn't a problem we have with the BSF programme. It truly is all these things and more – a once in a lifetime opportunity to improve where and how students learn, to re-define what we mean by a school, what it should look like and how it should be used.

10. Here is a snapshot of where we are now:

11. [SLIDE – BSF KEY FACTS]

- Capital investment in schools in 1997 was under £700m. Annual capital investment will rise to £8.2 billion in 2011 – a seven-fold real terms increase since 1997
- 3,500 new or remodelled schools over the lifetime of the programme
- First brand new BSF school – Bristol Brunel Academy – opened by the PM in September 2007
- A further 11 will open by spring, around 30 opening this calendar year.

- Back in November 2006, just one scheme had reached financial close. That figure has now reached 15, worth over £2.5 billion
 - More than 70 local authorities – that’s around 1,000 schools - are now engaged in BSF, with 15 authorities in Wave 6 joining this month.
 - Every local authority in England will be engaged in the programme by 2015.
12. So as you can see, the programme has been gathering pace just before Christmas, with the kind of frenzied activity usually associated at that time of year with last minute shopping. Four schemes reached Financial Close in December alone – including our first joint authority project, South Tyneside and Gateshead. And we also saw the first authority – Lancashire – to sign contracts for the second phase of its BSF programme.

The BSF process

13. We are therefore operating in an increasingly dynamic and fast-paced environment. Indeed over the past year we have worked hard to refine our processes. We reduced the time it takes for a project to come to market by up to 6 months, meaning that young people up and down the country will begin seeing and feeling the benefits of these new environments much sooner than was previously possible.
14. But this streamlining only works if all those involved - and particularly local authorities, schools and their stakeholders - have already been thinking hard about their estate-wide strategy for educating and supporting today’s young people – as well as young people in coming decades.
15. Central to the success of the BSF programme is the concept of educational transformation. But what does that actually mean? During the course of BETT you’ll hear from a range of people for whom thinking big about how we transform our educational landscape is their bread and butter; from local authorities already in the throes of their schemes, and from companies whose ideas and technologies are helping to change the way education is delivered.
16. Instead of asking, as we once did, ‘what do we want this school to look like?’ BSF provokes us to ask – and find answers to - a whole new set of questions. Questions like:
- What sort of skills and behaviours do we want our young people to emerge with as they enter adulthood?
 - Should every pupil benefit from individual learning plans, and where is the best place for them to study?
 - How can we weave ICT into all areas of the curriculum?
 - What flexibility needs to be in-built to ensure that the space works at all times and for all users?

17. [SLIDE – What is a school in the 21st century?]

18. It's never too soon for local authorities to start the dialogue with schools, students and the local community as they embark on this process. This is important if what is delivered – and what lives on for generations to come – are schools that are really owned by, and belong to, the community; delivering what they need and embodying their aspirations.
19. We recognise that BSF projects are large infrastructure endeavours that require strong links across a range of Government policies. That's why PfS has brought together a number of other key partners in the educational sector, particularly NCSL, QCA, TDA, Becta and the Innovations Unit, to work together to align educational policy within BSF local authorities.
20. Through this we anticipate being able to join together the energy and effort on curriculum and workforce reform, school leadership and ICT development along with BSF capital funding so that in the local context a real, transformational, step-change, is brought about. We call this our 'innovation zone' work and we are currently trialling it in two local authorities, Knowsley and Sheffield, with a view to developing it further over the next 12 months.
21. One area we are particularly keen to extend the 'innovation zone' concept to is the co-location of services around schools. I'll speak more about joined-up resources in a moment, but here seems like a good opportunity to put down a marker and let you know that we would be interested to hear from you about how we might act to successfully develop support for greater co-location of services in the future.
22. We are finally emerging from the shadows of earlier PFI school schemes which lacked the framework we now have in place to make sure the right school gets built in the right place. Before a local authority even receives a penny of taxpayers' money through BSF, we need to be convinced that the right size school is being built in the right location, and with the right design features to support the school's vision for education and specialisation.
23. While it's still early days for the programme, we are beginning to see what this new educational environment feels like and the benefits of new facilities and new approaches.
24. **Hadley – dance and drama facilities re-engaging young people – particularly girls – who had given up on education;**
Djanogly – Wi-Fi for the community to use as well as students to access from home

25. But you don't just have to take my word for it, here are the thoughts of some of the students and teachers at our first brand new BSF school who, just a few months in, are already seeing changes in attitude and behaviour

26. [BRISTOL BEFORE AND AFTER VIDEO]

The importance of design

27. Good design, thoughtful design, is at the heart of the BSF programme. Every brick and pane of glass, every space - inside and out, every piece of furniture, the installation and integration of ICT, all of this has been carefully thought about and is there for a reason.

28. There are a number of ways in which design plays a crucial role: in providing a safe environment, an inspiring environment, and once in which all students, teachers and members of the local community can be proud.

29. Narrow corridors, dark spaces, cold and dingy toilet blocks. For too long this has summed up our schools, places which looked like this

30. [SLIDE - OLD SPEEDWELL BUILDINGS]

31. Many of our old schools, our existing schools, provide ample opportunities for bullies and anti-social behaviour. BSF is designing out these black spots.

32. Our aspiration is for more of our schools to embody the best design elements of schools like the Bristol Brunel Academy.

33. [SLIDE - NEW BBA]

34. With wide, bright, light-filled corridors which run the full length of the building and provide a number of vantage points for passive staff supervision.

35. Teachers there tell us that students rarely run along this corridor, it's a relatively quiet and calm space, and as a result the tensions and fights which often break-out in these spaces has been reduced dramatically.

36. The toilets – far from being bog standard - have been designed to make these areas more attractive, cleaner and safer for pupils by situating toilet blocks nearer to classrooms and making hand-washing areas more public.

37. With schools thought to be responsible for around 15 per cent of public sector carbon emissions it was therefore no real surprise to see the Government seeking ways to make sure our new schools are at the forefront of reducing carbon footprints.

38. [SLIDE - ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES]

39. BSF schools are already making the most of sustainable features in design and construction, but the Children's Plan – the government's 10-year vision to improve all aspects of the lives of young people – takes this a step further. It includes the ambition that all new school buildings should be zero carbon by 2016 with a Task Force advising on how to achieve this aim.
40. In the meantime around 200 schools across in England will benefit from a share of £110 million over the next three years with the intention of reducing carbon emissions by around 60 per cent through energy efficiency and renewable energy measures.
41. Good school design shouldn't simply focus on creating environments where children want to go and where they want to learn. BSF is also focused on providing working environments which allow teachers to harness new technologies, not only as a teaching resource but to fuel their own personal and professional development; spaces which challenge teachers to teach in different ways and which allow them to respond to the personalised learning agenda.
42. ICT is an integral component of BSF, and with a high level of capital funding (equivalent to £1,675 for every pupil) it will bring about a step change in the level of ICT provision across the entire secondary schools estate in England.
43. Some schools are already harnessing the power of technology in impressive ways – and BSF will encourage these beacon schools to strive for even more. But we need to ensure that every student has the opportunity to equip themselves with the skills necessary to live and work in the 21st century.
44. New ICT-rich schools will also offers more opportunities for schools to provide their students and staff training or links with other organisations which might normally be off-limit through virtual schools, and to open up ICT use to the community as a whole – a 'fifth utility'.

45. [SLIDE – four shots of extended school/co-location of facilities]

46. And with schools only used to teach pupils for part of the day and for 38 weeks of each year, many local authorities are looking to use BSF as an opportunity to provide a whole host of local services through their new schools, ranging from local policing and healthcare through to public libraries and adult learning.
47. Local Education Partnerships, the public private partnership model created to deliver BSF, are increasingly proving to be the catalyst for making such wider regeneration a reality. Some of the examples you see here are from an earlier PFI school, the Jo Richardson Community

School in Dagenham, which has community policing co-located as well as public library and other facilities bringing people of all ages – who might not otherwise go there – back into the school.

48. Local authorities are now encouraged to think broadly about building on the BSF with other regeneration schemes delivered by the LEP. We are already seeing the possibility of using BSF as a lever for community cohesion, building schools at the intersection of faith communities; and for social housing; for community-use leisure facilities.

First end of term report for BSF

49. Last month saw the publication of the first independent evaluation report into the BSF, the first of the annual studies conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

50. While it is still early days for the BSF programme, this first independent report is already showing the green shoots of success.

51. It clearly shows that teachers and pupils are enthusiastic about the positive benefits new and remodelled secondary schools will have on transforming education, leading to improved teaching and learning, and the potential for better behaviour and performance.

52. Only 11 per cent of students said they felt inspired by their current learning environment – that means around nine out of 10 children are spending the vast majority of their waking hours in a building from which they can't wait to escape.

53. And it's a similar story for teachers. They said that in many cases classrooms are not fit-for-purpose; that schools have been badly remodelled over the years; classrooms are damp and smelly and they personally spend too long dealing with problems caused by poor lighting, inadequate heating, and noise levels rather than doing what they want to do, and what they're paid to do, that is teach young people.

54. As far as headteachers are concerned, they expressed high aspirations for the new buildings including improved pupil behaviour, increased pupil aspirations, flexible facilities and the ability to offer a broader curriculum.

55. [SLIDE – Stakeholder views on BSF]

- Only 20% of headteachers think that current school buildings raise pupils' aspirations.
- 87% of headteachers said BSF will promote/accommodate a wide range of learning styles.

- 84% of headteachers said BSF will improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school.
 - 56% of headteachers think their current building doesn't create a sense of ownership by community
 - 44% of headteachers think parents not proud of the current school
56. Looking specifically at ICT, the evaluation tells us that existing investment and infrastructure is already contributing positively to the educational experience in most schools. But staff are clearly excited by the opportunities it affords for greater personalised learning, more engaging lessons, and the possibility for far-reaching changes in teaching styles, as well as the potential for improved pupil monitoring and enhanced communication between schools and home.
57. The first evaluation report already points towards improvements in attitudes and behaviours, with quite striking results reported from one Special Educational Needs school which in six months saw vandalism and theft reduced by 61 per cent and violence or aggression towards staff reduced by 36 per cent.
58. Literature suggests that there is a clear link between the condition of school buildings and levels of attainment, with newer and better school buildings contributing to higher levels of pupil attainment. However the relationships between teaching and learning, pupil performance, and buildings are complex and more research is necessary for firmer conclusions to be drawn.
59. The report captures many of the issues and challenges we have been grappling with since the inception of this programme, and I think demonstrates why a programme of this scale is vital at this point in time.

The year ahead for BSF

60. At PfS as stewards of the programme as a whole, we are always looking for new ways to ensure that we deliver this ambitious project in as efficient, cost-effective and timely manner as possible.
61. With this focus on self-improvement in mind, over the past year, we have made a number of adjustments to the pre-procurement phase of the process to ensure that more authorities are ready to hit the ground running when they formally enter the BSF programme.
62. In 2008 our attention has turned to procurement. We are now considering whether there are ways in which similar refinements can be made to the procurement phase itself. This is not a case of the model being broken and starting with a blank sheet of paper – it is more about how we can make the existing model even more efficient.

63. With that in mind, we are due next month to share the feedback from some very interesting stakeholder workshops held at the end of last year, looking at three very specific aspects of the procurement process: design, ICT and the LEP, and how we can increase the pace of the programme, keep costs to a minimum and, overall, ensure that we make the very most of this opportunity to transform education in the 21st century.
64. In terms of **design** we have been looking at how best to use design as part of the BSF procurement process. Specifically, how sample schemes are working in practice in the BSF programme and the implications of fixing design earlier in the process from the perspective of designers, bidding teams and local authorities. We have been talking with all concerned to make sure that designs contribute as fully as possible to our goal of educational transformation.
65. Regarding the **LEP** we have been discussing ways to maximise the impact that LEPs may have, including a review of the role of the public and private sector within the LEP, and the scope of LEP activity to deliver wider regeneration projects in a local area.
66. And with **ICT**, we have been discussing how best to procure the required ICT services to maximise the quality, impact and value for money achieved when delivering the BSF programme. One of the main perceived benefits with the current model of ICT procurement is that it maximises the level of integration between the ICT supplier and the other partners in the LEP, but our workshops and discussions have explored to what extent this is true, and how we can deliver an ICT-rich teaching and learning environment which works now, but is flexible enough for the future.

Conclusion

67. I said at the outset, that BSF is much more than just a large scale building programme. I do not want our legacy to be measured in bricks and mortar, but by our success in providing 21st century learning environments for citizens of the 21st century; by our success in raising aspirations and improving the life chances of young people and communities across the country. Thank you.