



Insite

Partnerships for Schools
Quarterly
Spring 2008





Message from Tim Byles, Chief Executive

Welcome to the spring edition of *Insite*. As ever, the BSF landscape continues to be a fast changing one. Since our last edition, more local authorities have reached financial close on their BSF projects, we have officially welcomed Wave 6 into the programme and we have also had a number of school openings.

2007/8 was a year of delivery for PFS, with the end of March seeing us hit all of our delivery targets for the financial year. A total of 18 BSF deals were signed by the end of the financial year, representing over £2.5bn of investment in our young people. Since then, Westminster has become the latest local authority to join this fast-growing group.

Around 1,000 schools are now engaged in the programme, with 12 BSF having opened nationwide, from Newcastle in the north to Bristol in the South. The Michael Tippett School for students with Special Educational Needs in Lambeth was the most recent of these, and one that I have taken a very close and personal interest in. This school is the first SEN school to open in London and we were delighted that the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Ed Balls MP, was able to join us on the day of the official opening. More details are included in this issue, but I am sure you will agree with me that it is a very special school in every sense.

The recent period has also been a busy one in terms of policy developments too. Back in February, we announced the preliminary findings from the Procurement Review which was carried out on our behalf by PwC. Building on the efficiencies already being delivered in the pre-procurement phase of the process (up to a six-month reduction in timescales), the recommendations include ways in which to secure further efficiencies, providing programme savings of up to £250m and an additional reduction of around two months. These recommendations will be with Ministers for final approval shortly and we anticipate implementing them in the autumn for authorities in Wave 5.

There has also been a particular focus on bringing forward local authorities who were originally due to join the programme in later years if they can demonstrate they are ready to deliver. This is happening in two ways.

First, PFS and the DCSF have written to local authorities who were due to join in Waves 7 – 9 inviting them to submit expressions of interest in joining BSF this summer, subject to them being ready to hit the ground running. We have had a good response to this opportunity and expect to announce those who have been successful in due course, with a start date of early summer.

Second, the DCSF have now issued their consultation looking at the order in which those local authorities not yet in the programme will start their BSF projects. At the outset of BSF, the two key criteria determining the order in which local authorities joined the programme were, quite rightly, academic attainment and social deprivation. As a result, the areas of greatest need are now being tackled, and having reached this mid point of the programme, with around half of local authorities already engaged in BSF, it is right to consider whether there are additional criteria that should be taken account of in determining when the remaining authorities should join the programme.

The consultation is a welcome step to addressing this and could allow local authorities to join BSF when they can demonstrate they are ready to do so rather than in "waves" made up of a number of authorities at a time. This means that more local authorities could be able to join the programme earlier than was previously possible. More detail on the consultation is included in this edition on page 5.

Many of you joined us at our recent PFS/Guardian ICT conference in March, a write-up of which is included on page 10. We plan to repeat this event next year in light of its success, but in the meantime, please note down for your diaries that our Annual National Conference will take place on 18 September in central London. More details on the programme will be made available very shortly.

As ever, we welcome your comments on this edition of *Insite*. As previously, we have opted not to print this publication as part of our commitment to reduce our paper usage, so please don't print it unless you really need to.

Tim Byles CBE
Chief Executive



Project update & news

BSF Waves 1-3

A flurry of financial closes before Christmas took the total number of deals to reach this milestone to 15 by the end of last year, with Lewisham, Knowsley, Leicester and South Tyneside and Gateshead (STaG) all reaching financial close in December alone. Since then, Sunderland and Westminster have also reached financial close.

Students moved into brand-new schools in Stoke-on-Trent and Lambeth: the Lambeth school, The Michael Tippett School, is featured on page 2.

Construction began on Wave 2 projects in Islington and Liverpool.

BSF Waves 4-6

In Wave 4, Haringey has reached selected bidder.

A successful BSF networking evening was held in London on January 15, welcoming Wave 5 and 6 local authorities into the programme. Jim Knight, Minister for Schools, opened the event, which attended by representatives from nearly 30 local authorities, plus our BSF partners from DCSF, 4ps, NCSL, Becta and The Sorrell Foundation.

BSF Waves 7-9

In March, the local authorities allocated to Waves 7-9 of BSF were invited by the Department for Children, School and Families (DCSF) and PFS to make submissions for early entry into BSF. Local authorities that can demonstrate their 'readiness to deliver' will be able to start their BSF projects as part of an interim wave which will launch this summer.

We are now assessing submissions from local authorities and expect to announce the list of those that have successfully met the criteria for entry in due course.

Academies

The delivery of Academies continues to quicken. With the DCSF seeking to establish 50 Academy Trusts per year, the delivery on new build and refurbished Academies must keep pace. There are currently 355 Academy projects identified to date and of those Academies PFS will deliver 134 through the BSF LEP process, with 131 being delivered through the National Framework.

PFS is currently engaged on 95 projects which have reached Expression of Interest stage. 44 of these will be delivered through the BSF LEP process and 51 through the National Framework.

Milton Keynes and Sunderland both reached Contract Award in March. This achievement is a very important milestone for the National Framework, which was only launched just over a year ago. We now hope that the programme will gather more momentum as people see real examples of successful delivery. Academies will be delivered in the main between 2009 and 2015.



The Michael Tippett School

“The building cries out ‘Come and join us!’”

This is the reaction of one parent whose son is a pupil at The Michael Tippett School, which was officially opened by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, the Rt Hon Ed Balls MP, on 3 April.

The Michael Tippett School is a very special school. It is the first new BSF school to open in the London Borough of Lambeth, and the first Special Educational Needs School to open in the capital as part of the BSF programme. And for the families of the 80 pupils aged between 11 and 18 who attend the school, it is a clear sign that every child does matter.

“These children used to be pushed to the back,” said one mother. “But now because they are special, they have been given everything for their needs. And I think that it’s marvellous.”

The school has been designed and built specifically for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Designed and constructed by Apollo Education, working with architects including London Eye architects Marks Barfield, the school was delivered in just 54 weeks from the start of construction in January 2007.

The building includes a number of innovative features including a sensory room and garden which can be used as an external learning space, hydrotherapy pool, spacious changing facilities with state-of-the-art hoists, wheelchair-accessible classrooms, wide corridors and a lift, a kitchen to help students develop basic cooking skills, a music/drama studio, and a community hall for sports and social activities.

Doors are colour coded throughout the school – blue for toilets, yellow for classrooms, and red for staff rooms – so students can easily find their way around the two-storey building.



Eco-friendly features

Among the energy efficient features of the school are a grass sedum roof, which helps insulate the building and provide a habitat for wildlife, a Combined Heat and Power plant which will use the excess heat produced by the school to heat the hydrotherapy pool, and CO₂ monitors within the classrooms.

During construction, hollow-core spheres were embedded within the concrete to reduce its volume.

The outside of the building features free-standing laminated-timber columns spanned by vividly coloured metal louvres which shade the classroom windows.



Staff and students began moving from two schools onto the new single site in February, with plenty of time built into the timetable to allow students to adapt to their new learning environment. Headteacher Jan Stogdon said the students were already responding positively to their new learning environment.

She added: "For many of our students communication is a real challenge, and they can find it hard to adapt to changes to where they learn and how they learn. The input that students and staff have had throughout the design and construction process has helped our children understand the transition to a different site. We have all been amazed by how quickly the students have settled in to their new surroundings and how excited they are by the new facilities on offer."

Christine Lemmon, Apollo's Community Investment Manager added: "One of the most rewarding aspects of the project was allowing the construction to become part of the learning process.

"Students regularly visited the site to enable them to experience the construction first hand and also to prepare them for the huge transformational change which would be occurring."

Involving the local community

Local residents have been charting the progress of the bright and cheerful-looking building erected in their neighbourhood, and teachers feel there will be many opportunities for the students to meet local people, and for local people to meet the students – and learn more about special educational needs along the way.

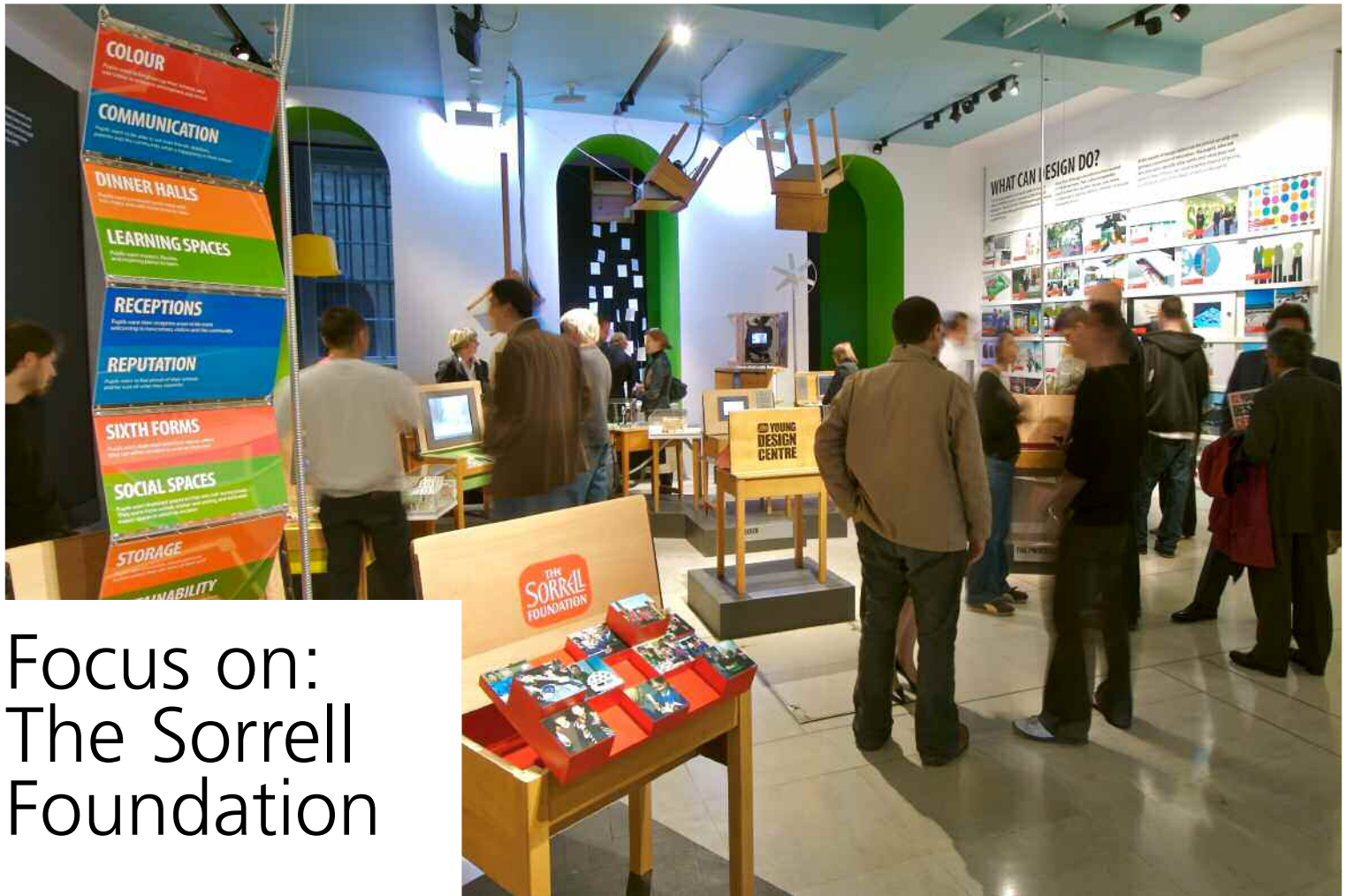
A range of community initiatives were launched by Apollo Education during the construction, including the creation of a Community Project Fund which financed the purchase of three interactive plasma screens for the school.

A video of students, their parents and staff from The Michael Tippett School talking about the impact of their new school was shown for the first time at the official opening, and can be viewed on the BSF Voices section of the PFS website at: www.partnershipsforschools.org.uk/library/bsf_voices_michael_tippett.jsp



Images, from far left to above left: the back garden of the school; the reception area; and Ed Balls talking with Aaron, a student at The Michael Tippett School, with Julia Barfield of Marks Barfield and Tim Byles.

Above, from top: the sensory room wall; hydrotherapy pool; and a close-up of the grass sedum roof.



Focus on: The Sorrell Foundation

Joinedupdesign for BSF

The Sorrell Foundation was set up to inspire creativity in young people. The *joinedupdesignforschools* programme puts them in the driving seat by giving them control and responsibility as clients in a client-consultant relationship with architects and designers. They work together on a project to address issues related to school design that affect their daily life.

The Foundation has worked with hundreds of schools across the country, and over 50,000 pupils have identified common problems that they say if resolved, would improve school life. They want hygienic, safe and functioning toilets; a civilised lunch break; indoor and outdoor social spaces where they can relax and talk with friends; and varied and flexible learning spaces. They understand how colour affects their mood and they want it used to enhance the school atmosphere. But, most importantly, they want to feel proud of their schools.

In spring 2007, the Sorrell Foundation opened the *What's Next For School's?* exhibition in the Young Design Centre, Somerset House. An interactive display, created by award-winning architects Casson Mann, uses film, web games, models, audio and imagery to describe what pupils want in their schools. The facilities include a learning centre for creative workshops, a 60-seat lecture theatre, and good exhibition space in an important cultural hub.

The Foundation is already working with local authorities in Waves 1 – 5 of the Building Schools for the Future programme, and with four new academies. It expects a minimum of 4000 young people to participate in the creation of Pupil Design Briefs over the next two years, and will ask the questions, what do young people want their schools to be like, and how can the design industry ensure we do not miss this once in a lifetime opportunity to transform education provision.

One route would be for every school engaged in a rebuild, refurbishment, or small intervention programme, to create a client team of pupils to represent the aspirations of the young people at their school, and for each client team to follow a creative process of research, meetings, visits and discussions to produce a Pupil Design Brief telling their architects and developers exactly what they want.

For the *joinedupdesignforschools* process to have the best results, it should be used in its full form, as described in the *joinedupdesignforschools* book, and begun at the start of design development as part of the overall vision and brief, before any major design decisions are made. It works best when young people are completely involved at all stages in a genuine, extended dialogue with the designers and architects.

The outcomes of the programme are both tangible and intangible. Through this experience, architects and designers acquire in-depth knowledge of the needs of the main consumers of education, the pupils. The tangible outcomes are the resulting buildings and products, created in response to, and with consideration of, the Pupil Design Brief. The intangible benefits are of equal value: pupils develop work and social skills such as problem solving, team-working, reasoning and communication, which lead to increased self-confidence and self-esteem. And there is a further benefit: in this period of educational transformation, a process that engages and informs pupils about their changing future, is more likely to encourage a positive acceptance of change.



Images, above top: A Sorrell Foundation workshop at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Picture: Sarah Murphy

Above bottom: Pupils presenting their ideas to Studio E Architects for the KPMG City of London Academy. Picture: Graham Carlow

Alongside the joinedupdesignforschools programme the Foundation is piloting the Young Design Programme, in which client teams of pupils work with design undergraduates to create concepts for developments in their schools. The student designers are mentored by design professionals, which means that we are now exploring a creative programme that spans 5 to 75 year olds. The Foundation hopes to encourage the sector further, and this year launched the RIBA Sorrell Foundation Schools Award to draw attention to the importance of excellent design in the school environment and to highlight the benefit of engaging with pupils in the brief and development stages.

Read our interview with Sir John Sorrell, co-founder of The Sorrell Foundation, on the back page of this edition of *Insite*.



Images, above and main picture: The Sorrell Foundation Young Design Centre at Somerset House

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Open Daily

Free entry to exhibition

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DCSF consultation

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has launched a public consultation on managing Waves 7 to 15 of BSF in order to decide the best order for those local authorities not yet in BSF to enter the programme.

Commenting on the DCSF consultation, Tim Byles said: "At the outset of BSF, the two key criteria determining the order in which local authorities joined the programme were, quite rightly, academic attainment and social deprivation. As a result, the areas of greatest need are now being tackled, and having reached this mid-point of the programme, with around half of local authorities already engaged in BSF, it is right to consider whether there are additional criteria that should be taken account of in determining when the remaining authorities should join the programme.

"Today's consultation is a welcome step to addressing these issues, and could allow local authorities to join BSF when they can demonstrate they are ready to do so rather than in "waves" made up of a number of authorities at a time. This means that more local authorities could be able to join the programme earlier than was previously possible."

The consultation is set against a backdrop of accelerated delivery in BSF:

- 6 month reduction in pre-procurement timescales coupled with more robust preparation in advance of joining BSF.
- Proposed 2 month reduction in procurement phase timescales, delivering up to £250m savings.
- Acceleration of a number of authorities originally due to join BSF in 2008 – 2009 with a fast-track start date this summer.

Proposed Indicative Timetable:

DCSF issued consultation: **9 April 2008**

Consultation meetings: **May/June 2008**

Final date for responding to the consultation: **4 July 2008**

DCSF issues guidance on revised expressions of interest: **August 2008**

Local authorities submit revised expressions of interest: **October 2008**

DCSF announces revised national programme, and sets off the next tranche of local authorities to provide evidence of readiness to deliver: **early 2009**

DCSF announces next local authorities to enter programme, followed by Remit meetings: **spring 2009**

The consultation document is available online at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/



The Bard comes to BSF

Music and drama spaces in new BSF schools are providing opportunities for engagement in drama, giving more young people than ever before the chance to work as a team and to make new friends, to explore and understand great works of literature, to develop confidence and self-esteem – skills that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

That is why PfS is organising a BSF showcase event with the charity the Shakespeare Schools Festival (SSF) in the House of Commons in May. Here, SSF Director, Chris Grace, describes why the work of an Elizabethan playwright is relevant in 21st century schools.

“Last year 20,000 11-16 year old pupils participated in the Shakespeare Schools Festival. For many it was their first visit to a professional theatre. For some it was in a barely understood language. For their parents, an evening of duty became one of pride and wonder. Each evening both casts and audiences experienced the power of four of Shakespeare's plays. The Festival worked for everyone - theatres, schools, casts, teacher/directors and parents. SSF is unique in its UK wide reach, and in its 'offer'. This in part explains the Festival's astonishing growth since its inception only seven years ago.

How it all began

In 1998 a drama teacher asked, “May we please use your half-hour Animated Shakespeare script as the basis for our Macbeth. I said, “yes, of course”, and though I did not know it then, the adventure had begun.

Two years later I was celebrating the Millennium with my family in a longhouse in Sarawak. I remember lying awake one hot, tropical night and thinking, “if one school, why not others? The 12 part S4C/BBC Animated Shakespeare series was widely used throughout secondary schools. If pupils enjoyed watching them, why not let them perform them with professional help?”



But could a 14 year old convince us as Lady Macbeth or as Prospero? We were soon to find out. In October 2000, eight schools performed a 30 minute production each, over two nights, to a capacity audience in The Torch Theatre, Milford Haven. A performance of Romeo and Juliet brought the audience to its feet - and changed my life for ever. The Shakespeare Schools Festival was born.

Last year, eight schools had grown to 1,057; one theatre to 106 - from the Shetlands to the Channel Isles. The next Festival takes place in October this year. In May, teachers receive a workshop from theatre education practitioners, the MAP Consortium, on how to direct a cast of up to 30 students of mixed abilities. In September each cast receives a workshop from the National Youth Theatre.

Shakespeare goes global

Now teachers in other countries have begun asking us the same question as the one that inspired the Festival 10 years ago, and we are discovering, through the wonders of the internet, that Shakespeare is a global brand.

Our response is Shakespeare 24 in which, on Shakespeare's Birthday, 23 April, productions will be performed at 7pm local time in every time-zone. This unique day begins in New Zealand and ends 24 hours later in Hawaii. The UK contribution is hosted with the support of the Liverpool Culture Company Limited as part of the 2008 Liverpool European Capital of Culture celebrations.

Thirty-four countries are involved this year in Shakespeare 24. By 2012, with the help of the Royal National Theatre, we intend that to be over 100 nations. As part of the Cultural Olympiad, we plan to organise an International festival in which each of 100 countries is represented by a youth group who will tour Britain and perform alongside UK schools in the fortnight leading up to the Olympic Games.

We have seen how the Festival helps grow a sense of community as well as delivering drama entitlement. Over the last seven years teachers have attested to the many young lives being altered and enriched as a result. New schools have new theatre spaces that could be used for rehearsal and performance. New schools have an important role to play in our vision for the future."

For more information about SSF visit:
www.ssf.uk.com

Images :Young performers tackle scenes from (left to right) Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream and Macbeth.



It's good to talk

Constructive dialogue leads to proposed BSF procurement refinements

In February, Partnerships for Schools shared the preliminary findings of its procurement review with BSF stakeholders, the outcome of a four-month consultation which was typified by wide-ranging and constructive discussions with more than 120 active members of the BSF community. The headlines from the initial report – produced by PwC – suggest that in a maturing market, significant time and cost savings can be made, perhaps up to £250 million across the national BSF programme.

Together the proposals highlight ways to further improve the timeliness, efficiency, flexibility, and ultimately, the delivery of the BSF programme which has picked up pace considerably over the past year. PFS has already introduced a number of measures which have significantly reduced the pre-procurement phase of the programme – by as much as six months. But in an increasingly experienced and BSF-aware market, PFS felt it was important to focus on what additional refinements could be made to the procurement phase of BSF.

The proposals, which will be presented to Ministers for approval shortly, would deliver important time savings of up to two months, making this part of the process even more streamlined and efficient. Proposals to reduce the number of sample schemes from architects will allow greater emphasis to be placed on producing the highest-quality designs for schools which are truly transformational for students, teachers and local communities for decades to come.

Key recommendations from the BSF Procurement Review include:

- A reduction in the overall procurement time – down to 75 weeks from the current 82-week model;
- More comprehensive pre-qualification of bidding consortia;
- Two lead bidders are selected earlier in the process, after 29 weeks rather than 44 weeks in the current process;
- Time and cost savings in the design process, with sample schemes only required for two projects, and a re-focusing of time for detailed development and completion of design work;
- Integration of ICT in the BSF programme should continue as there are demonstrable benefits for building design;
- More focus on effective partnering issues throughout the procurement process.

The consultation exercise provided PFS with a valuable opportunity to reflect on experiences to date and, importantly, to use the views and expertise of those engaged in BSF nationwide as a springboard for these new proposals.

Together, the proposed refinements spell good news for an already healthy and dynamic market, offering a range of benefits – not least the opportunity for significant cost savings at both a national and a project level.

So far feedback about these proposals has been generally positive from the BSF community; all sectors have told us that they found the dialogue constructive, and have welcomed the emphasis on improving partnership, which goes to show that it's good to talk (and listen) as momentum builds in the BSF programme.

So what next for the proposals? Ministers will shortly be asked to approve the recommendations which, if approved, will be published in full along with a timetable for implementation. It is envisaged that changes will local authorities in Wave 5 and onwards. Full details will be available on the new-look PFS website.



Delivery in Action

Westminster City Council

For this edition of *Insite*, PFS invited Westminster City Council to provide an update on their BSF project:

Delivering Westminster's targets for secondary school improvement moved a step closer in April when the Council became the first wave three BSF project to reach financial close. Each school has confirmed individual improvement targets and milestones as part of the project's "Six Ambitions" for improvement. The top improvement target in the BSF "Six Ambitions" is for Westminster's value added at KS2-KS4 to be in the top quartile nationally by 2012.

The Westminster project is unusual in a number of respects. Most schools in the BSF project are voluntary aided and Westminster has adjusted the LEP to include three VA trustees as non-voting observers.

Project management arrangements were set up to deliver financial close on time and with excellent value for money. Westminster's BSF strategic board took advantage of the size of the project to include all nine headteachers and trustees of the three voluntary bodies.

A three-person sub-committee of the Cabinet was given full delegated authority on all BSF matters and the Chief Executive is a very active project sponsor. Members agreed to underwrite an Early Works contract prior to financial close to protect the project deadlines.

The project team has excellent specialists across a range of fields and school stakeholders, governing bodies and voluntary trustees committed and delivered to all agreed deadlines.

Given the constrained inner city nature of all school sites (many are listed or in conservation areas) regular meetings with dedicated BSF planning officers were scheduled to ensure that designs progressed to timescales.

Elected Members from the Council Leader down committed to the project as a top Council priority including supporting the expansion of three voluntary schools. A corporate project group with leading officers from key Council services meets weekly to solve problems and oversee the project plan.

Extensive stakeholder and resident consultation took place in the design phase. At Pimlico School, the only all-new BSF school, issues included engaging and winning over well-organised residents groups, dealing with an attempt to list the old building and simultaneously consulting and deciding in favour of a change to Academy status.

Unusually, the project has chosen to accelerate the design of the six non-sample schools once the preferred bidder was selected. The aims were to re-test affordability and to bring forward capital investment to support the school improvement plans as soon as possible.

Westminster BSF Director Paul Doherty commented:

"Teamwork and shared commitment to project planning, mitigating risks and delivering to deadlines has got Westminster BSF where we wanted to be. Gaining the confidence and active support of all our stakeholders has been an absolute must in all of this. Support from PFS and by our external advisers has also been good. Financial close for the non samples is now our priority so schools' improvement targets can be supported and delivered for all our students."

Westminster City Council's BSF Key Facts

BSF:

- £141million Design and Build (No PFI)
- £11million ICT
- £4million extra capital from WCC
- Nine schools for BSF: three sample schools; six non-samples
- One all-new school; eight remodelled schools

Academies:

- Paddington and Westminster open 2006
- King Solomon (all age) Primary open 2007
- Pimlico planned opening in 2008

Westminster City Council's LEP Partners

- Bouygues Partnership For Education and Community (Westminster) Limited
- Building Schools for the Future Investments Ltd

LEP supply chain:

- Bouygues UK Construction
- Ramesys ICT

Advisers:

- Nabarro
- PwC
- Gleeds
- Navigant ICT

If you would like your BSF project to feature in the next edition of *Insite*, please contact us at insite@p4s.org.uk

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Partnerships for Schools website. At the top, there is a logo for 'partnerships for schools' with the tagline 'building schools for the future'. A navigation menu includes links for Home, About us, Media centre, Programme, What about me?, A-Z of BSF, Library, and Help. A search bar and a 'Got a question?' dropdown are also present. The main content area features a 'Feature Project' section for Bristol Brunel Academy, a 'What about me?' section with a filter for 'I am a...' (e.g., pupil, parent, teacher), a 'Latest News' section with a headline about DCSF consultation, and a 'Forthcoming Events' section for the National ISPAL Conference 2008. There are also video thumbnails and a 'Lessons Learned' section.

New-look website for Pfs

PfS launched its new-look, open source website (pictured above) at the ICT in Building Schools for the Future event in London on 18 March.

The new website is the product of an 18-month web rationalisation and knowledge management project by Pfs to make information about the national BSF programme more accessible for all stakeholders.

It also provides a single focus for programme information which was previously available to stakeholders via the Pfs website, and the two sites managed by the DCSF, the BSF.gov.uk website, and the BSF Knowledge Management Portal.

The use of Alfresco open source software means that the technology and functionality can be re-used by Pfs or anyone else in the BSF community. Karl Hoods, Head of Information Systems at Pfs, said that "open source offers us a flexible, tailored solution which allowed us to spend the budget where it matters most, providing functionality on the product rather than on licence fees."

"As a publicly funded organisation we needed to ensure a value-for-money solution to our information management needs in support of our delivery goals and targets over the lifetime of the programme. The Alfresco product set provides us with the underlying technology to help achieve our aims and provides a flexible architecture on which we can build and adapt to the demands of a programme of this size and complexity."

Pfs worked with Ixxus, an Alfresco Gold partner in the UK, to define and deliver an enterprise-class solution which provides both strong content management and social computing functionality.

The new online presence will be developed further over the coming months to enhance networking and collaboration opportunities for the BSF community.

Speaking about these features at the launch, Tim Byles said that "as a national programme involving all 150 local authorities in England, thousands of schools, a wide range of private sector partners, and with a significant number of Pfs staff working remotely, it is important that we harness technology to provide access to the latest information and sharing of best practice for the success of the programme.

"I want to encourage anyone with an interest in BSF and educational transformation to not just look at our new site, but become actively engaged with it and with us. Ultimately I hope that our collaborative working areas will become a kind of Facebook for BSF, with stimulating and relevant online discussions."

Features of the new website include:

- Fully searchable content
- An A-Z of BSF
- What about me? for BSF stakeholders
- Pages on each local authority in BSF, both now and in future waves
- Library of BSF standard documents and guidance
- Academies information
- Comprehensive programme, process and progress information
- Lessons Learned
- Frequently Asked Questions

Log on to the new-look website at www.partnershipsforschools.org.uk.



Project Faraday

New DCSF publication

The latest publication in the DCSF 'Schools for the Future' series showcases exemplar designs for science spaces, following Project Faraday, a pilot project that partnered designers, educationalists and construction specialists with schools being re-built as part of the One School Pathfinder programme.

Project Faraday was devised by the DCSF to promote innovative science facilities that not only support 21st century pedagogy but also inspire teachers and learners.

The new secondary science curriculum has been designed to inspire and challenge all learners and prepare them for the future. It engages learners at many levels, linking direct practical experience with scientific ideas. While investigative and practical science continues to be key parts of a student's experience, presenting, researching and debating are playing a bigger role than in previous times.

Science spaces need to reflect this curriculum and the latest developments in a student-centred approach to learning.

Five major themes emerged from the project:

1. New settings for science:

The Faraday designs provide a rich and varied range of settings for science that reflect the school's inspirational learning models.

2. Managing transition and change:

To ensure new settings for science are successful, an ongoing process of change is needed to handle new ways of working and new designs for science facilities.

3. Getting the most from technology:

Technology in science can make it easier for teachers and learners to achieve what they want to do, as a support mechanism which enables space to be used more efficiently and effectively.

4. Science across the whole campus:

The project found that school buildings and grounds can provide a vast, real-life resource for science learning.

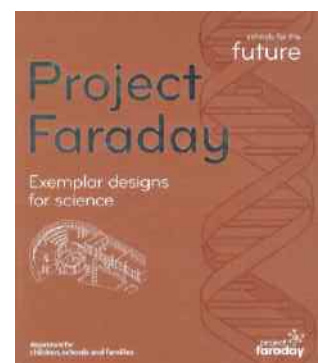
5. Beyond the school gates:

The Faraday schools are all building bridges with organisations outside, such as other schools, local businesses and museums, that can provide students with direct connections with the outside world and world of work, taking advantage of real, live data to enliven abstract topics.

The new book details the process that the Project Faraday teams and their partner schools went through in developing their designs. It can be used by other schools and design teams to create their own innovative science spaces. The process includes working through a visioning process, learning strategy, learning processes, and finally the design of the spaces, underpinned by cultural change within the workforce.

The image above shows the science demonstration area developed for East Barnet School by DEGW.

The Project Faraday publication (below) is available to order from www.tsoshop.co.uk or can be downloaded from Teachernet and the Partnerships for Schools website





Event reports

ICT in BSF 18 March 2008

The ICT in Building Schools for the Future event, hosted by Partnerships for Schools and Education Guardian, in association with Becta, brought together over 90 BSF local authorities, key project team members from PFS and the private sector for a day of discussion, debate and networking.

Schools Minister, Jim Knight MP, opened the conference, which was held at the Royal College of Surgeons. Tim Byles delivered the keynote speech, during which he launched the new-look PFS website (see page 9) - the picture above shows Tim and Jim Knight looking at the new website.

Tim gave a progress report on all aspects of ICT in BSF and the Academies Programme, and spoke about the need to be bold in the use of ICT that challenges both teachers and learners to make the most of new technologies.

Lessons learned were an important focus for the day, which was the second ICT conference run by PFS, following on from the inaugural event in September 2006

All presentations from the day are available on the Education Guardian website:
<http://education.guardian.co.uk/bsfevent>

BSEC 2008 12-13 February 2008

The Building Schools Exhibition and Conference moved to Manchester for a bigger, improved show in 2008.

PFS had a stand near the local authority village, which was a very busy feature. Tim Byles delivered a keynote speech to the conference, and PFS also participated in several workshops and seminars.

BETT 2008 9-12 January 2008

This year at BETT, PFS took a stand as part of the 'Policy in Practice' zone, with other government bodies such as Becta, TDA, QCA, NCSL and SSAT. We provided several speakers to the dedicated Policy in Practice seminar area, which was a great success.

PFS also featured in the main seminar programme at BETT: Tim Byles delivered a keynote speech and Steve Moss spoke on ICT in BSF. Tim's speech is available to read on the PFS website.

Future events

SSLD Launch RIBA, London 12 May 2008

Ministerial launch of the DCSF/PfS guidance on Standard Specifications, Layouts and Dimensions (SSLD) for school buildings.

In addition to the keynote address by Schools Minister, Jim Knight MP, there will be speeches by Tim Byles and Richard Simmons of CABE, and workshops examining SSLD issues and case studies in more detail.

www.architecture.com

ISPAL Conference 2008 Warwick 3-4 June 2008

The National ISPAL Conference for the Active Leisure and Sports Sector, entitled 'Forecasting the Future of Leisure' will take place in June. ISPAL is The Institute for Sport, Parks and Leisure.

Liz Delany, PE & Sports Adviser for PFS, will be speaking at the conference.

Jennie Price, CEO of Sport England and former Olympic champion Jonathan Edwards will also be speaking at the event.

www.ispal.org.uk

NCSL Conference ICC Birmingham 18-20 June 2008

The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) annual conference. This year's event is entitled 'Seizing Success.'

www.ncsl.org.uk/conference2008

Save the date: Partnerships for Schools' Annual Conference

The PFS Annual Conference will take place on 18 September 2008, at the Marriott Grosvenor Square.

More details will be available soon.



In conversation with...

Sir John Sorrell

Sir John Sorrell is co-chair of The Sorrell Foundation, which aims to inspire creativity in young people and improve quality of life through good design. He has also chaired CABE since December 2004.

Sir John was knighted in the 2008 New Year Honours List for services to the creative industries.

What difference do you think BSF and the Academies programme will make to young people?

What young people will get is a new environment that functions much better; but more important is the fact that they will be inspirational and stimulating environments to be in. Of course we want environments that are fit for purpose, but we also want to inspire and lift their spirits, and for me, that is what learning is all about.

What do you see as the key opportunities and challenges of BSF?

The biggest challenge in BSF is to achieve high-quality, sustainable environments against time and cost pressures. In 20 – 30 years time, people will forget whether the project was delivered on time, but they will know if high-enough quality has been achieved for the students.

What advice would you offer to local authorities and schools that are about to join the BSF programme?

There are two main points here.

First, you need to get your whole client team together very, very early on – and this includes pupils as part of that.

Second, everyone involved in BSF needs to look at best practice and make sure we learn from it. You can look at examples on a website or in a publication, but there is no substitute for actually going to visit different sites.

And don't just visit schools either – if you want to look at the best ways of welcoming people to a building, go and visit a hotel as they know how to do this very well. Similarly, if you want to see how to make public toilets a pleasant environment, go and visit a hotel to see how they do it. And if you want to see how to create dining spaces that can accommodate 1,000 kids during lunchtime, go and look at fast food restaurants. Valuable lessons can be learnt from all of these and a series of visits to these and other places can only result in a much better informed client.

And any advice specific to the design community?

The main piece of advice I would give is to be absolutely clear when you are talking about your ideas and presenting them. We all know the client group is not made up of people who have extensive experience in building.

Designers can make big difference by using understandable language and visuals. Most people cannot read plans, so designers can do an awful lot through the use of clear communications.

There's nothing like a drawing or a model to help a client understand what you are talking about.

And never forget that scale is something very difficult for people to understand.

What are you most proud of in your career to date?

It's the work that The Sorrell Foundation has done. It has to be.

My wife Frances and I have worked together for over 30 years now. The work we have done since we set up The Sorrell Foundation nine years ago is by far the most important thing in our careers. The results you see from young people developing skills, increasing their confidence and realising their potential – lifting their sights and aspirations – are amazing. It's all about unlocking their creative talents.

Finally, a 'non-BSF' question. Which three people - dead, alive or fictional - would you like to have dinner with?

I'm going to stretch the rules. I'd have a dinner party for six, so Frances and I would invite four guests between us: Leonardo da Vinci, Queen Victoria, Martin Luther King and Marilyn Monroe.

For more information about The Sorrell Foundation, read the feature on pages 5 & 6.