



Insite

Partnerships for Schools
Quarterly
Spring 2009



partnerships for schools

building schools for the future



Welcome to the spring edition of Insite.

The first quarter of 2009 has been an eventful and busy period for Partnerships for Schools (PFS). External conditions continue to prove challenging, but despite these factors, Building Schools for the Future (BSF) continues to deliver.

Indeed, the end of the financial year saw us meet or exceed our key delivery milestones for the second year running, including school openings and the number of deals reaching financial close.

Despite progress, there is no doubt that BSF is operating in very challenging economic climate. Around 40 per cent of investment into the new schools comes through Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and we are working extremely hard to secure the senior debt to enable deals to close and schools to continue to be rebuilt. Nine deals have already closed since the start of 2009, including a £89.6m PFI project in Southwark.

Twenty banks are currently financing BSF schemes that have a PFI component, including new entrant Aviva from the insurance sector. A further significant development has been the £300m support to BSF schemes with a PFI component from the European Investment Bank and we are engaged in ongoing discussions about extending this level of support, including to smaller schemes.

Not surprisingly for a programme of this size, BSF has proved a popular subject matter for external reviews over the last couple of years. Most recently, the Government's independent auditor – the National Audit Office (NAO) – carried out a year long review, culminating in a report to Parliament in early February.

Focusing on how BSF was being managed and whether the programme delivered value for money to the taxpayer, we very much welcomed the NAO's findings which included the explicit statement that BSF is now being

well managed and that costs are being kept under control.

This level of confidence in the programme is also reflected in the Government's recent announcement that PFS has assumed responsibility for administering the £200m co-location fund that Secretary of State Ed Balls announced in December last year.

The fund, part of the Children's Plan *One Year On* strategy, is designed to encourage external agencies and local authorities to consider co-locating services such as education, social services, libraries, police and health centres when planning their capital strategies.

The DCSF is also currently looking at ways to extend PFS's delivery responsibilities further across the range of Schools Capital programmes. The detail of this is now being worked through with a view to transferring appropriate responsibilities from DCSF to PFS during the coming financial year.

Good progress is also being made in the delivery of the Academies programme. Currently, 127 Academies are being delivered through the BSF Academies Framework, with a further 100 projects in the pipeline.

This has meant that we have reached the current £2 billion OJEU limit much sooner than originally anticipated, and so in March, a new £4 billion framework to procure the design and build of Academies and other educational facilities in local authorities was put out to tender, offering opportunities for up to 24 main providers and their supply chains.

Under the new framework, all contractors with a track record of delivering secondary schools or similar projects, have been eligible to bid enabling smaller regional bidders, as well as larger national firms to get involved. The number of contractors that have come forward to participate has more than doubled to 57.

The successful contractors and their supply chains are expected to be in place and bidding for work from November/December 2009 onwards.

Looking ahead to the second half of the BSF programme, the Chancellor of the Exchequer reaffirmed the Government's commitment to the programme in the Budget. He also made clear the intention to move away from a wave-based approach for BSF.

This means that local authorities who are currently discussing new BSF projects with PFS have the flexibility to join the programme on a rolling basis, once they have demonstrated their readiness to begin.

In the interests of good project management and maintaining momentum of delivery in line with available resources, we are now working with a number of authorities to assess their readiness and anticipate an announcement detailing which authorities will next join BSF in the next couple of months.

All of us at PFS are delighted to have been named as the "Best Government/Government Agency Team" at the recent Public Private Finance Awards 2009. This recognition of our success and dedication to the programme instills us all with renewed enthusiasm to face the challenges and changes to come.

We hope you find this edition of Insite a useful update on progress and developments in, the BSF and Academies programme. As ever, if there are topics or specific projects that you would like to hear more about, please do get in touch with the team.

Tim Byles CBE
Chief Executive



Project progress at a glance

BSF progress

Schools benefiting from BSF investment	86
Deals closed	35
LEPs formed	20
Non-LEPs formed	9
LAs in programme	80
Projects in progress	88

Academies progress

Projects on site	19
Projects in procurement	132
Through LEPs/BSF	54
Through Academies Framework	77
Through other procurement route	1



Latest schools benefiting from BSF investment

Local Authority	School	Date opened
Leicester	Judgemeadow Community College Soar Valley College	June 09
Manchester	Buglawton Residential	May 09
Nottingham	Hadden Park High School	April 09
Leeds	South Leeds High Ralph Thoresby High John Smeaton Community College Cardinal Heenan	April 09
Kingston-upon-Thames	Chessington Community College	April 09
Lambeth	Stockwell Park	April 09
Durham	Durham Johnston	April 09
Leicester	Beaumont Leys	April 09
Lambeth	Stockwell Park	April 09
Lewisham	Catford	April 09
Lambeth	Elm Court Special School	March 09
Bristol	The Bridge Learning Campus	January 09
Knowsley	Christ the King Catholic and Church of England Learning Centre	January 09
Leicester	Fullhurst Community College	January 09
Lewisham	Sedgehill	January 09
Manchester	St Matthew's RC High School	January 09
Sheffield	Silverdale Secondary School Newfield Secondary School Talbot Specialist School	January 09

News in brief

This section provides a round-up of the interesting snippets of news and information we pick up through our contacts with local authorities, private sector contractors and our government partners. If you have a news item that you think Insite readers would be interested in, please send it to insite@p4s.org.uk.

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Kent Local Education Partnership (LEP) - a long term joint venture between Trillium, Kent County Council, Northgate Information Services and BSFI - have officially launched the Kent National Skills Academy for Construction. The Academy will offer a wide range of apprentice and training opportunities, and has been established because there are a number of construction projects starting in Kent, including BSF, which will provide great opportunities for those in the industry.

The launch took place at Northfleet School for Girls, which was chosen due to its inclusion in the BSF programme as well as to highlight one of the central aims of the Academy - to encourage more girls into a career in construction.

Approval for the National Skills Academy for Construction (NSAFC) was awarded in September 2008, and the programme will be supported by ConstructionSkills and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

Christina Montague, Regional Strategy Adviser for ConstructionSkills South East said: "The sheer scale and potential of this programme for the construction industry is immense. BSF will follow an approach of up-skilling and accrediting the existing skills of the workforce, as well as providing opportunities for work experience and apprenticeships. In essence, local communities stand to benefit from increased employment, apprenticeships and work placement opportunities."

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Tameside Council's Children and Young People Panel published a report in February, *Healthy Eating in Schools*, which highlights examples of healthy eating good practice across schools in the borough and addresses the issues facing school catering staff.

The report recommends such practices as ensuring dining areas are inviting environments and involving parents in efforts to improve school dining facilities. It highlights how the council's BSF project will provide opportunities to fulfil these recommendations. Councillor Vincent Ricci, chairman of the scrutiny panel, said: "We have been very impressed with the

hard work and dedication of school catering managers in delivering healthy meals to budget and to the strict nutritional standards while trying to find innovative ways to stem the decline in uptake of school meals.

"Our recommendations aim to help further improve the service by sharing good practice."

A full copy of the report can be downloaded from Tameside Council's website: www.tameside.gov.uk/scrutiny/children/healthy_eating.pdf

Also in Tameside this quarter, current and former pupils from secondary schools in the area attended the first Schools for the Future Student Awards. The event took place at



Dukinfield Town Hall on 26 March 2009. Schools were asked to nominate outstanding students in a series of categories, including 'most significant community contribution' and 'best student ambassador'. PFS Chief Executive Tim Byles presented the awards, a majority of which were sponsored by companies with direct involvement in the development of Tameside's BSF project.

* * *

In February, 13 schools and 15 teams of young architects came together at RIBA for a day of creative dialogue and design. The idea behind the Design for Education event, which was organised by Surface to Air Architects, with the support of educational consultants Bryanston Square and funded by the RIBA Young Practitioners Panel, was twofold: for the schools, it was a chance to explore creative solutions to their problems, get a fresh perspective on their buildings, and engage in stimulating dialogue with young design professionals.

For the architectural practices, most of which are less than five years old, it was an opportunity to take on a challenge, demonstrate their abilities, and get involved in a market that can be difficult for less established firms to penetrate.

Surface to Air and Bryanston Square are planning to build on the enthusiasm the event generated by creating other opportunities for schools and young architects to come together. As Pascale Scheurer from Surface to Air

explained: "We have worked closely with Bryanston Square for several years now, putting proactive Heads in touch with excellent young architects, running competitions and events like this design charette. There are many more schools out there who would like to be involved in this, as it offers them a bespoke service tailor made for their school, their budget and their situation. We hope to undertake many more such projects together in coming years."

* * *

Figures announced in March suggested that Bristol looks set to reverse the trend of pupils going outside the city's borders for secondary education this year. Schools in Bristol received 301 more applications from city families for places for September 2009 than they did a year earlier. Among the schools with the largest increases in applications were the Bridge Learning Campus, Brislington Enterprise College and Bristol Brunel Academy - all of which were rebuilt under BSF.

Councillor Clare Campion-Smith, the cabinet member with responsibility for children, said: "The rise in applications for Bristol schools does show signs of increased confidence, especially where schools have been rebuilt with exciting new facilities and new Academies have been introduced.

"It is encouraging to see that less Bristol parents are choosing schools outside of the city - this demonstrates that the improved quality of secondary education is at last being noticed. We now need to ensure that this becomes an upward trend based on improved results."

To add to Bristol's school renaissance, also in March the town had a visit from Science Minister Lord Drayson, pictured above. He toured the Bridge Learning Campus, a newly-opened BSF school, spending twice as long as he had scheduled and engaging with children aged three to 18.



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In March two students each from the six schools to be rebuilt through BSF in Bridgwater met the two bidders competing for the project, to give the companies feedback on their design proposals for the schools. The 12 students, who are representing their peers on an 'expert client group' made sure that representatives from rival bidders Aura and BAM PPP UK Ltd were clear

News in brief, cont'd...

about what students wanted in their new schools.

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A BSF consultation panel of students in Blackburn with Darwen recommended to the local authority that fingertip technology should be installed in all new BSF schools to make them safer. Other suggestions noted in the feedback, which clearly demonstrated pupils' concerns for security in schools, included installing CCTV cameras so parents could log onto the internet to see their children.

In response to the suggestions, Councillor Vali Patel, who leads on Blackburn with Darwen's BSF project, advised that all security measures had to be balanced alongside the need for schools to be made accessible. He added that he believed the recently-opened Burnley Campus was a good example of how to reach a good balance between the two: "Security is important, but you have to make sure you strike a good balance. Schools these days are community places and you don't want to put barriers up when you redesign schools. We have all types of people using Burnley campus - it's not just a school."

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A bus with a difference has been touring communities across Knowsley. The inside of the vehicle, called the Knowledge Bus, is a mini-version of the borough's new look schools – the centres for learning. It has a classroom inside with laptops for visitors to use. Teaching experts have been accompanying the bus on its tour, to inform pupils and their families about educational opportunities in Knowsley.

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A survey conducted by North East Lincolnshire Council found that only 45 per cent of the adult community take part in physical activity. As a result the council has decided to propose a leisure refurbishment project in collaboration with its BSF project. Sue Well, Deputy Director of Community and Support Services, explained the decision: "By linking the outcomes of the review with the BSF programme, we have an ideal opportunity to develop facilities that are fully integrated and to develop the potential for



greater community access to sports and leisure facilities within schools, at times when they are not needed for core school activity."

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A survey commissioned by the government's educational technology agency, Becta, found that many parents feel "excluded" by their children's reluctance to share information about their time spent at school.

Becta commissioned television psychologist and government adviser Tanya Byron to investigate the "communication gap". The report says that children do not like to be "hassled" by parental inquiries, and that only 16 per cent of children volunteered information about their day at school. It found that 82 per cent of parents wished they had more information about their children's school life.

Becta suggests that school websites and online resources for homework can help to make parent "feel much more a part of their child's learning".

More information about the study can be found on the BBC website:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7956017.stm>

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Research in the United States and at Oxford University has suggested that teenagers' brains operate more efficiently if granted more time to sleep. One headteacher, Jon Barker, of Hugh Christie Technology College in Kent, decided to test this theory and introduced a "staggered day" to the school timetable in September 2007. The results have been positive, says Mr Barker: "Our exam results are improving, attendance has improved, teachers report that behaviour is better and parents say that they are no longer having battles with their kids so relationships at home are more relaxed."

More information on this approach can be found here:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/mortarboard/2009/mar/20/lie-in-pupils>

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In the interest of transparency and information sharing, Staffordshire County Council has decided to broadcast its council meetings via a live webcast. One of the first broadcasts to take place was a meeting on the local authority's BSF project, which was watched by over 1,000 people.

Councillor Robert Smith, deputy leader of the council, said: "We are pleased that so many people tuned in to watch the webcasts. It proves that not only have the public responded well to the new and transparent way of communicating but there is also a very healthy interest in local government decision making. Technology like webcasting means that we can open our meetings up locally, nationally and even internationally". The broadcasts can be viewed at <http://www.staffordshire.public-i.tv/site/>

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Martin Burgess, the headteacher of Shuttleworth College in Lancashire, a BSF school, has revealed that since opening in September 2008, there has not been a single incident of bullying in both of the school's unisex toilets, with the only problems taking place in their 'ordinary' (single-sex) facilities.



The toilets were introduced after council leaders saw BSF guidelines, which recommended the move to unisex facilities as single-sex toilets blocks were often a hot-spot for bullying.

Mr Burgess said: "My predecessor supported the scheme and thought it was a good idea and I think it is a superb idea. There is nowhere the kids can be bullied, because there is nowhere to hide. They are not a place where gangs can hang out and there is also no smoking in the toilets which can be problem in schools.

"We find that kids who wouldn't normally go to the toilets for fear they be picked on and bullied are using them. Some children would go a full day without using the toilets so they wouldn't get bullied. Unisex toilets have eliminated the bullying and we find we have bullying problems in ordinary toilets, but those are only a handful of incidents."

Shuttleworth College's unisex toilets also featured on BBC's Newsround this month.



BSF 'well-managed' says NAO report

"It is only right that a programme of the scale and importance of BSF is subject to public scrutiny" – a sentiment often stated by Partnerships for Schools and in particular by Chief Executive, Tim Byles, who has been involved in a number of reviews of the BSF programme.

The National Audit Office report and subsequent Public Accounts Committee (PAC) saw BSF processes and delivery of the national programme under the spotlight. Ahead of the PAC's final report, here are some of the key findings from the NAO's study: *The Building Schools for the Future Programme: Renewing the secondary school estate.*

Programme management

- "The Department's decision to establish PFS has helped to achieve effective programme management. PFS provides national leadership and is able to carry out programme management activities which the Department and local authorities could not carry out themselves...It [PFS] has also exercised effective control over the overall scope, flow and cost of the programme in a way that could not be done by individual local authorities." (Page 8)

- o "PFS has helped achieve a high standard of programme management. It provides national leadership through making the Chief Executive accountable for delivery. Having a single body accountable for delivery also improves the chances of success." (Page 35)

Costs and quality control

- "The prices of BSF buildings have been kept under control by the funding arrangements put in place by the Department and implemented by PFS." (Page 7)
- "The Department and PFS have taken measures to help control costs so that BSF school capital costs are similar to most other school building programmes and cheaper than Academies built before their integration into BSF." (Page 9)
- "BSF schools have been built to a higher specification and space standards than previous schools" (Page 25)

Local Education Partnerships

- "Early evidence shows that having a LEP can lead to time and cost savings on repeat procurements...The first few projects developed after LEPs were established have been procured more quickly and efficiently than comparable projects undertaken without using a

LEP." (Page 7)

Making BSF even more efficient

- "PFS has streamlined the strategic planning and procurement processes so that it should be quicker in the future." (Page 6)
- "Since 2007, the Department and PFS require local authorities to demonstrate that they have sufficient capacity to manage their BSF projects before allowing them to commence procurement." (Page 28)
- "The Department and PFS now require schools and local authorities to produce full change management plans for how they will improve teaching and learning." (Page 2)

Funding and economic conditions

- "BSF funding makes it easier for local authorities to do more than they can with funding for single schools. It encourages local authorities to rethink the organisation of schools across their estate and allows them to coordinate their development, including merging and building new schools." (Page 14)
- "By the end of January 2009, economic conditions had not delayed any BSF projects." (Page 38)

Download the report at:
http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/schools_for_the_future.aspx



PfS wins 'Best Team' award

At a ceremony held in the The Grosvenor House Hotel in London's Park Lane, PfS scooped the award for Best Government/Government Agency Team in the Public Private Finance Awards 2009.

Now in their eleventh year, the Public Private Finance Awards have become the biggest event of the year for the public private partnerships industry and the event saw more than 1200 people come along to celebrate the best deals of the year and network with the most senior people in the industry.

A panel of some of the most respected and experienced professionals from the public and private sectors decided on the winners and PfS is delighted to have won this prestigious award.

Tim Byles, Chief Executive of PfS said: "Winning this award comes at the end of a busy and productive year for Partnerships for Schools. It is particularly gratifying that our peers have recognised our achievements - from the 86 schools now benefitting from BSF investment, to the introduction of new processes and guidance to make delivery of BSF more effective, timely and cost-efficient, the fact that contracts continue to be signed despite the difficult economic conditions, as well as positive comments on our management of this once-in-a-lifetime

programme from the National Audit Office.

With many challenges and changes ahead for PfS over the coming 12 months, winning the Best Team award is a wonderful way for us to reflect on our successes and celebrate what, dedication, enthusiasm and team work can achieve."

Other winners from the BSF community on the night were Aura Newcastle named as Best Private Sector Consortium.

Kirsty Thirlwell, Chief Executive of Aura, said of their win: "While this is a very proud moment for Aura, it also reflects the dedication and hard work of a much wider range of stakeholders and interested parties, particularly headteachers and school children, who have all helped to make the BSF programme in Newcastle the success it is.

"BSF challenges all parties engaged in the process to produce a transformational school, and although it is still early days, the schools we have handed over so far are reporting positive changes in behaviour with students showing an enhanced sense of pride in their schools."

South Tyneside and Gateshead (STaG) BSF also scooped two awards - Best Education Project and Best Public Sector Project Team.

Stan Johnson, inspiredspaces LEP General Manager and formerly STaG's BSF Project Director said: "The opportunity does not come along that often to lead and work with a truly professional and committed

team to deliver a complex project such as STaG's BSF Programme.

Winning these awards demonstrates not only the teams in-depth understanding of the BSF process but also the wider benefits that the Government's national BSF initiative can bring through educational transformation.



Walbottle Campus, one of the schools delivered in Aura Newcastle's BSF project.

New from Pfs

Sharing lessons learned and inspiration from early waves of BSF is at the heart of what Pfs does, and there are three new ways in which Pfs is helping to spread best practice from across BSF and beyond.

Imagine



This year's BSEC event was the perfect setting for the official launch of the *Imagine* website, which has been set up to showcase examples of innovative school design from around the world and hopes to inspire students, teachers and architects involved in BSF and other school renewal programmes.

The site is sponsored by Partnerships for Schools and Balfour Beatty, and has been developed by Bureau - Design+Research, from Sheffield's School of Architecture.

Pfs Chief Executive Tim Byles launched the site during his keynote speech at the conference, saying: "Building Schools for the Future provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for us to transform education. We are already seeing some exciting – and award-winning – designs coming through BSF, but we want to do more to help spread best practice and the *Imagine* website is an accessible way of doing this.

"We know that embarking on BSF is an exciting, but sometimes also a daunting prospect for schools and local authorities who are eager to learn about success stories elsewhere in the sector. By supporting the *Imagine* project, Pfs hopes to give inspiration to students, teachers, governors, parents, as

well as architects, local authorities, and sustainability experts.

"Visiting the *Imagine* website will bring a world of inspirational design examples within the reach of everyone at the click of a mouse".

Since its launch in February, the website has gone from strength to strength, with over 6,000 visits recorded in two months, and 43,655 pageviews, from countries ranging from the United States to the Netherlands.

The site has also been continually expanding since its launch and currently showcases 138 schools from all over the world. This number will continue to grow, with more studies being added to the site on a regular basis.

www.imagineschooldesign.org

Case studies

In March at the Pfs/Education Guardian and ICT event, Pfs Chief Executive Tim Byles announced that, building on Pfs's commitment to share good practice and lessons learned from the early waves of the Building Schools for the Future programme, a new Case Studies section has been created on the Partnerships for Schools website.

He said that there was growing body of knowledge and experience from across the BSF community which could help inspire and inform those in the early stages – or yet to start – their own transformational journey:

"This isn't about Pfs telling BSF teams what to do – this is about us encouraging schools, local authorities and the private sector to share the approaches they have taken and the tips they can pass on so that there is no need to reinvent the wheel every time.



"There is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to BSF. Everyone has their own experience of choosing an ICT provider, how they got students and staff involved in the

design process, or how private and public sector are working together and learning from each other within a Local Education Partnership, but there will be many common themes that echo across the BSF programme nationally.

"For this reason we are committed to disseminating this wealth of accumulated knowledge as widely as possible. We are calling on the BSF community to help us populate this site with more examples of both their successes and the challenges they have overcome."

There are now 25 case studies on the site, including:

- Interviews with those responsible for Teddington School's 'Pilot Zone' which gives students and staff the opportunity to test new ICT and furniture before they move into their new BSF school;
- How Mossley Hollins High School and Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council have worked together to establish a strong student voice that is guiding their BSF project;
- The e-learning strategy for Leeds and how training opportunities for staff and students is helping them get to grips with new technology.

The Case Studies section will have new studies added each month on topics from student engagement to sustainability.

We are always interested in hearing about potential new case studies, so if you have any ideas please email them to info@partnershipsforschools.org.uk

The case studies can be viewed here: <http://www.partnershipsforschools.org.uk/library/casestudies.jsp>

Operational LEPS

Next this month Pfs will launch a new 'how to' guide for activities that support the successful strategic planning, set-up, mobilisation and operation of Local Education Partnerships (LEPs).

Following the review of operational LEPs by PricewaterhouseCoopers at the end of last year, a toolkit of nine Practitioner Notes on issues including developing a shared vision, effective partnering behaviours and value for money in exclusivity will be available to download from the Pfs website.



Delivery in Action: Acklam Grange virtual school

BSF in Middlesbrough

Middlesbrough is a Wave 2 BSF local authority with a £100m programme that includes all the state secondary schools in the town.

The programme will see eight schools renewed and will include an innovative scheme to co-locate a mainstream and SEN school; a new build pupil referral unit; a single site for the borough's Roman Catholic school; renewed SEN schools specialising in education of students with Autism and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; and Acklam Grange School, a specialist mathematics and computing college, which is the first scheme to begin construction under BSF in the Tees Valley.

Middlesbrough's BSF programme has been in development since 2005, with Outline Business Case approval awarded in September 2007. The first two schemes, Acklam Grange and Ormesby-Priory Woods, commenced construction in November 2008 and February 2009 respectively, and the BSF Team is currently working with the building contractors to develop schemes for the remaining four schools, which will begin on site in 2010. The first schools will open in September 2010 and all six schools will be open by September 2012.

School representatives have been closely involved in developing the schemes and staff at Acklam Grange School have kept students informed and included throughout the process to date. The latest step in involving students is the creation of the new school

within virtual world, Second Life.

Acklam Grange School and Middlesbrough City Learning Centre (MCLC) have worked in partnership to develop a project using 3D virtual schools. A replica of the new Acklam Grange School design has been created in the virtual world to engage stakeholders with the new school building 18 months before the actual building is complete.

The MCLC team has created the first building in Second Life within a three-month timescale using PDF files from the architects. The shell of the building was completed within the first month followed by texturing and furnishing. It is believed that the Acklam Grange School is a world first, in that it is the first school to be constructed in Second Life off plan, i.e. before it is constructed in real life.

High quality texturing

The virtual school builders use high quality textures including shadowing and light beams to make a realistic representation of the learning spaces and furniture has been created to scale to place in the rooms. To make the experience even more immersive the CLC use an iMAX system with 3D glasses for viewing the virtual environment. Acklam Grange School now has a fully functioning model of its new building and the BSF team at Middlesbrough local authority has started to put it to use in a number of ways including planning for room usage and furniture and equipment layout. Meetings can also be held within the virtual environment.

The building is also being used to look at CCTV camera placement, design and fabric of the building and to vision cast with the rest of the school staff.



All Year 7 pupils have experienced a virtual tour of the building to begin the transition process and familiarise themselves with the layout of the new school. Pupils have used an avatar (digital 3D character) as a model when considering potential new uniform design. Some pupils, aged 13 and above, have already ventured into the teen version of

“We are now able to combine real and fantasy worlds enabling pupils to express their creativity and imagination and allowing us all to benefit from their obvious learning potential.”

Second Life. They have spent time on Middlesbrough’s private fully locked-down islands, where the new school will soon be replicated, and have been very excited about working in this game-like environment, engaging with creative learning projects and getting to know their new school building ahead of time.



Future plans

Future plans for the project are as follows:

- To have all pupils familiar with the new building before transition into the new school in September 2010.
- Collaboration working between school staff on all the new build projects in Middlesbrough (three other Middlesbrough schools are currently being built in the virtual world).
- MCLC is also looking into the uses of the environment as a non-linear part of the VLE used by the participating schools.

- MCLC have scaled up the project to be able to offer out this service to schools and authorities throughout the UK.

Acklam Grange Headteacher, John Bate, said: “This project offers us the opportunity not only to plan in fine detail every aspect of our new school and experience - it is as though it already exists - but also to use the environment to allow pupils, parents and other stakeholders to know and have a real feel for the new school in a unique and very exciting way.

“Staff are already exploring their learning areas to plan the impact and learning opportunities. We are already considering a virtual school play, by pupil avatars, in a virtual drama studio, in a new school that is not even built yet. By the time we open, our pupils should certainly not get lost.”

Middlesbrough City Learning Centre Manager, Andy Fisher, said: “These are the environments that young people of today regularly inhabit. We are now able to combine real and fantasy worlds enabling pupils to express their creativity and imagination and allowing us all to benefit from their obvious learning potential.

“For the first time staff involved in BSF projects have the ability to get a realistic visualisation of their school, spot potential pitfalls and identify possible obstacles to learning in true three-dimensional space. This has definitely taken us a step forward in our ability to visualise our vision for the future of learning in Middlesbrough.”

Future Pfs Events

BSF Open Day
10 July 2009
Allerton High School, King Lane, Leeds

Our first BSF Open Day at Allerton High School in Leeds is a great opportunity to hear directly from the school, local authority and local education partnership about their experiences in the BSF programme.

Annual Forum
10 September 2009
Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre, London

Last year’s event was sold out so make sure you are quick to register for the 2009 forum, which promises to be an informative and exciting event.

The agenda is yet to be confirmed but you can expect to hear the latest announcements on the progress of the BSF programme; the impacts on it from the global economic climate and stories from schools, local authorities and private sector partners on their experiences.

Excellence in BSF Awards
12 November 2009, Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane, London

The first ever Excellence in BSF Awards event in 2008 was hugely successful and we will once again be highlighting and celebrating the most innovative projects and people in the BSF programme later this year.

The categories will be announced soon so get thinking about who you’d like to see rewarded for their vision, hard work and dedication to the programme in your area. Details on how to nominate will be available at the same time.

Design Conference
24 November 2009, British Museum, London

The second Pfs design conference will explore how intelligent and inspirational design can help transform education, look at some of the issues around sustainability and explore how to create schools that meet the needs of young people, teachers, and the wider local communities.

Further information and registration details will be available soon. Visit the Pfs events page for updates:
www.partnerhipsforschools.org.uk/event_list

Update: Delivery Partners

NCSL

Recent research carried out by NCSL has shown that staff development programmes for innovation and transformation, rather than using techniques that reflect the subject matter, often replicate the one-to-many “broadcast” approach to learning that so many schools are trying to overturn.

In light of this discovery, NCSL is gradually overhauling its own leadership support for the Building Schools for the Future and Primary Capital programmes and, following extensive piloting, the accent is moving over to problem-based, active learning techniques.

“We came to a conclusion that we needed to do more than talk the talk,” says NCSL special projects director Hannah Jones. “We now have to put into practice what we preach.”

“We have brought in expertise to make our programmes even more relevant and the updated programme will roll out in October.”

Feedback on the changes from the NCSL’s recent BSF conferences was extremely positive.

“The involvement of Cambridgeshire County Council’s BSF schools in NCSL’s programme has helped school leaders and staff to explore how they can develop and implement innovative approaches to learning,” says Kevin Manley, the county’s BSF project manager.

NCSL has worked with local authority officers and headteachers to understand the needs of schools and to develop personalised support, and built the feedback from this work into continuous improvements to the programme.

“We are recycling the learning as we go along,” adds Hannah Jones, “so that our relationship with school leaders and their LAs is as effective as possible. And we are sharing everything we are learning on our Future website for school leaders and all their stakeholders.”

You can find out more on these websites: <http://www.ncsl.org.uk> and <http://future.ncsl.org.uk>

CABE

CABE has recently published new guidance and case studies focusing on design quality and the transformation of existing schools rather than the building of new ones.

Refurbishment projects are a significant part of BSF but it is often assumed that new schools will be superior to a refurbished, remodelled or extended ones when, in fact, many existing buildings have been transformed to provide benefits that could never be achieved through a new build.

New from old: transforming secondary schools through refurbishment shows how the potential of existing school buildings can be realised to give them – and the school – a new lease of life. Many buildings have qualities in their materials, arrangement or construction – not always obvious or appreciated before they are transformed – that can be successfully exploited by refurbishment, adaptation or extension.

Good architects find that the challenge of working with what is already there, rather than starting with a blank canvas, often results in a more imaginative scheme. This guide looks at the questions to be considered when shaping refurbishment projects and offers practical advice for taking them forward.

As commissioning a BSF school can be complex and challenging *Enabling design quality in BSF* features two case studies illustrating how CABE has worked with Leeds City Council and the London Borough of Waltham Forest to help them through the process. It looks at the support provided for six secondary school projects in Leeds, where CABE’s enabling service allowed an independent and respected view of design quality to bolster the local authority team; and how with CABE support, Waltham Forest achieved high-quality, award-winning school buildings.

As well as providing guidance and sharing best practice case studies, CABE will also be providing training for local authorities before they begin their BSF project to help them to lay the foundations for achieving better value through good design. This will be provided through CABE’s enabling programme enabling programme, which will also offer separate support to Client Design Advisors in collaboration with the RIBA.

These publications are available at: <http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications>

4ps

The schools team at 4ps is working closely with PFS to ensure that there is an effective range of support in place for the local authorities involved in the BSF programme.

Currently, the focus is on providing support for those potential new entry authorities who have been invited to prepare and submit “Readiness to Deliver” documentation.

Those local authorities prioritised by DCSF following receipt of revised “Expressions of Interest” late last year, now have the opportunity to move on to the next stage and submit “Readiness to Deliver” documents from early May 2009, with a view to joining the main BSF programme later in the year.

So, to help these authorities move efficiently and successfully through the process, 4ps are reviewing and updating the material available under their Expert Client Programme. Work with a number of local authorities has also identified some unique support requirements for their individual projects. These have been recognised as priorities so the local authorities involved are funding the development of relevant support packages themselves.

Additionally, 4ps deliver the mandatory Gateway Reviews within the BSF programme, which examine the projects at critical stages to ensure that they can progress successfully to the next stage, and are offering additional reviews to evaluate progress at other key points in the process.

Further details about this support can be obtained from juliet.manuel@4ps.gov.uk





Delivery in Action: Training the next generation

Engineering and construction company Costain's apprenticeship scheme will benefit local communities in the BSF programme. Costain currently works with Lewisham and Bradford LEPs to transform schools and also offers local young people the opportunity to become an apprentice as part of the government's National Skills Academies (NSA) programme.

The NSA programme is part of the Government's mission to create a world-class workforce for the future and puts employers in the driving seat to become centres of training excellence supported by Construction Skills and the Learning Skills Council.

The Costain vision is of a 10-year skills and employment plan on each project that leads to improved skills on the projects and a legacy of skills for the local community. Alistair Handford, PFI Director for Costain, said: "Through work experience and apprenticeships we want to bring the worlds of work and school closer together. We have already made significant steps towards this goal."

Jeremy Galpin, Skills and Development Manager at Costain and Chair of the National Skills Academy Group, explained that there are 28 NSA construction projects throughout the UK, seven of which are in the BSF programme, and 14 more are due to be approved this year across the construction industry. Construction on BSF NSA projects alone will create 250 apprenticeships and 400

Full-time project co-ordinator, Patricia Walker, is responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of the skills and employment plan at Lewisham and works closely with the LEP and all other local stakeholders. Image courtesy of Elizabeth Clancy.

job opportunities. Costain is 100 per cent behind the NSA model as it gives them the chance to make a real difference by offering skills and training to those in the local communities in which they are working.

When Costain entered discussions with the Local Education Partnership at Lewisham, an employment and skills plan was created for the project taking into account the types of skills required and how they could be transferred once the project ended; stakeholder agreement from the local supply chain was vital in order to provide continuity of work.

"Through work experience and apprenticeships we want to bring the worlds of work and school closer together."

It takes time to create relationships for long term sustainable impact and Costain is confident that the project will build on the four apprentices and six work experience placements implemented since July 2008, when the project was registered as a skills academy. To develop the workforce and skills culture in the local area, they have carried out 600 skills profiles to identify skills gaps and aim to create up to 60 jobs a year.

Ben Weston, an apprentice working with Atlantic Joinery, said: "Being an apprentice has given me the opportunity to get closer to my goal of becoming an experienced carpenter. As well as my college work, the site-based experience at Catford Business College, a Lewisham BSF project, has provided

me with the opportunity to develop my skills through training."

Jeremy Galpin said: "We know there are challenges but long-term and local thinking are key. Apprenticeships offer local people a great start to a career in construction. We are in discussions with the local authority and our partners VT about addressing the skills needed in the community in a 10 year time frame – beyond the build.

"We would like to expand our apprentice scheme to offer apprenticeships to pupils at schools we are building. They could gain an NVQ Level 3 in Construction Contracting Operations while undertaking a BTEC National Certificate on a day release basis and working with our Partners on a school. With everyone working together, this could result in a significant number of local apprentices across Lewisham."

See www.constructionskills.net, www.nationalskillsacademy.co.uk and www.costain.com for further information.

Record expressions of interest in frameworks

Interest in PFS frameworks – from would-be advisers and from users – is at an all-time high with two frameworks attracting significant attention in recent months. A new framework specifically designed to help local authorities with the early stages of BSF engagement now has 11 advisers on board, while 22 companies have now been shortlisted for the new £4 billion framework to procure the design and build of academies and other educational facilities in local authorities which are not yet engaged with BSF.

Eleven companies have been confirmed as advisers for the new Education & Children's Services Advice and Support Framework which will provide expertise and guidance to local authority education and children's services teams, and other organisations engaged in BSF and related capital programmes, to help them maximise the transformational opportunities offered by BSF.

The 11 companies are (in alphabetical order):

- Appleyards;
- CfBT;
- Cambridge Education;
- Capita;
- Cocentra;
- EdisonLearning;
- Mouchel;
- Place Group;
- Serco;
- Tribal; and
- VT Education and Skills.



In particular the framework advisers can offer local authorities support in the crucial early stages of BSF such as developing their pre-engagement programme, including Readiness to Deliver submissions; developing local authority-wide and school specific Strategy for Change (SfC) documents; supporting effective consultation strategies; and providing support for change management.

The Pre-Qualification Questionnaires (PQQ) deadline for the Contractors' Framework – the £4 billion framework to procure the design and build of Academies and other educational facilities in local authorities which are not yet engaged with BSF – saw 57 companies express an interest in opportunities afforded by the new framework.

PQQs for the Contractors' Framework were submitted by 57 companies, more than double the number for the first Academies Framework. From these 18 have been shortlisted to continue with Invitation to Tender (ITT) process for the North and

Midlands contract, and 18 for the London and South. Fourteen companies have been shortlisted for both geographical areas, with eight companies making it onto a single shortlist.

While procured on a national basis the Contractor Framework will have two discrete geographical areas. The first area will be made up of the North West, the North East, Yorkshire and The Humber, the East Midlands and the West Midlands; the second will be made up of East of England, the South West, the South East and London. A total of 24 contractors will be appointed, with up to 12 contractors appointed for each of the two areas.

Tender documents are due to be issued by the end of May, and successful contractors and their supply chains are expected to be in place and bidding for work from November/December 2009 onwards. The new framework will operate in tandem with the initial Academies Framework, which will continue to operate until December 2010.

Tim Byles, Chief Executive of PFS, said: "It is four years since PFS launched the adviser frameworks, and over this time we have seen the importance of being able to recommend well-informed and relevant professional support which is committed to the objectives of the BSF programme, whilst also guaranteeing competitive rates and value for taxpayers' money."



The *Insite* Interview

Andy Buck, headteacher of the Jo Richardson Community School in Barking, Dagenham, is the first serving headteacher to be a member of the PFS Board.

The JRCS is a new school which first opened in 2002 before moving into a brand new £30m PFI school in 2005. Andy Buck's ambition for the school is that it should be 'a great place for young people to learn' and that it should truly be a place which is used year-round by the whole community. Seven years after opening the school was classed as 'Outstanding' - but the school team continues to look for new ways to build on excellence.

As part of the PFS Board, Andy is able to bring the experience of someone who has been through a process of establishing a new school, as well as represent the views of the teaching community and young people and ensure that transformation remains at the centre of discussions.

As someone who has led a school through significant changes, what difference do you think the BSF and Academies programmes will make to young people, school staff and communities?

Although our school wasn't a BSF school - it was one of the last PFI schools to be built - what we have seen more than anything else is the creation of an inspirational environment. It inspires the young people who come to the school, it inspires everyone who works there and it also gives a message to the local community about them mattering, and the importance for them of this cathedral of aspiration within their own community which says "you can do it", just the same as everybody else. That's the biggest thing this programme can do, it can put education on the map.

What are your three top tips for heads involved in BSF or Academies projects?

Having been through a similar process my three top tips for headteachers are:

Don't underestimate the value of front loading your planning and getting as much clarity as you can at the beginning of the process for the simple reason that this makes you a very good client which will help you get a good school at a good price. If you don't know what you want or you keep changing your mind, what you get in the end isn't as good and you don't develop the same kind of partnership which leads to a good end product. We didn't have the range



of the support available now through PFS, NCSL and 4ps, but we got out and visited schools to inform us in our decision making.

It's really important as a head to build capacity within your senior team to deliver a project like BSF. Sometimes people imagine it's possible to do a project of this scale on top of the day job, and frankly it isn't. In the early days we didn't have a full cohort, even so I had three deputies who ran the school day-to-day which freed me to have the focus, time and flexibility to make it a success.

Never forget who the school is for: it's for young people and for the whole community. All those stakeholders need to be consulted at every stage and feel they have a genuine voice and not that you are just paying lip service to their views.

A good example for us was we wanted our school to have a real civic presence and for it therefore not to have a fence around it so the school was the frontage to the community - quite a brave thing to do because the school site used to be full of burnt out cars and there was a lot of potential for graffiti and vandalism.

What emerged through consultation with the local residents association was that they had been trying for a number of years to create a wheel park for young people, and we were able to put some money aside and work with the local authority to build a wheel park to open at the same time as the school. It meant that hard-to-reach young people felt that there was something for them as part of the project.

In your career, what are you most proud of to date?

In my 21 years in education - 13 of them as a head - the thing I'm most proud of is the creation of the JRCS and its building. It's an iconic set up and has three things which really make it stand out.

Firstly, it's designed from the teaching spaces outwards putting pedagogy at the heart of the building design which for us has meant horseshoe shaped seating areas, which quite literally give every young person a seat in the front row and leads to greater interaction.

Secondly, we took a view that we don't want to lose students at 14 to college for vocational courses, so we took the opportunity to build in high-quality vocational learning spaces, such as we had seen in Holland, so we now have spaces for painting and decorating, engineering, plumbing, electrical installation. All of this was designed in conjunction with the local FE college so that rather than ship the students out, the teachers come us. We have some students who spend 25 per cent of the week in these areas and it says to them that JRCS has something for them.

Thirdly, we're a true community school, not just in name. We have a shared public library, a public cafe, a community police office based in the school, adult learning during the day, evenings and weekends, so that the school has a different way of working throughout the day.

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

One is Cameron Mackintosh, the theatre impresario. If I hadn't been a teacher and headteacher, I would have loved to be a theatre producer.

Round the table too would be Estelle Morris because she's a great champion of young people. She recognises the importance of good design and teaching environments and at the moment is working with BCSE on an enquiry about what makes great schools.

The third person would be someone who's quite extraordinary in terms of the bravery he showed at the time and that's Charles Darwin - a great thinker, not afraid to challenge the existing orthodoxies and someone who I think the more you look into what he discovered and what he put forward, the relevance of that to everyday life and the importance of the survival of the fittest and so on will never go away.

Listen to the full interview at <http://www.partnershipsforschools.org.uk/library/insite>