



BSF NEWS

Building Schools for the Future Newsletter

BSF is a programme to rebuild or refurbish every secondary school in England.
The progress so far – read all about it here...

Issue 2
Autumn Term 2008

SHORTLISTED BIDDERS SELECTED

**THREE CONSORTIA HAVE BEEN SHORTLISTED
TO BECOME THE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNER IN
THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE BSF PROGRAMME.**

At the end of the first stage of the process to select our Private Sector Partner (PSP), Balfour Beatty, Equitix and Inspiredspaces [Carillion] have been shortlisted and will now progress to the detailed stages of the competitive procurement process.

Each of these organisations is leading a consortium of architects, construction firms and IT companies who will bring a range of skills and experience to help modernise the schools in the BSF programme.

Four consortia submitted expressions of interest by the mid-August deadline. After a thorough evaluation of each consortium's experience and track record one, Guildhouse Barclays Consortium, was ruled out from further involvement in the process.

The three shortlisted consortia will soon be asked to prepare their initial proposals and designs for two "sample schools" (Neale-Wade and Thomas Clarkson Community Colleges) as well as explaining how they will work with schools, the Council and local communities to deliver BSF across the rest of Cambridgeshire over the next 10-15 years.

These initial proposals will be evaluated early next year. The two leading consortia at that stage will go on to prepare their designs and proposal in detail. Final bids will be submitted next summer.

BSF Project Director, Alan Kippax, said "I am pleased that we have three strong bidders as we move into the detailed stages of the process to select our private sector partner. The next twelve months will be hard work for bidders and schools but it will also be very exciting to see real proposals and designs emerging for the BSF schools in Fenland."

BSF a year on...

The BSF world is very different in autumn 2008, compared with where we were at the time of the last newsletter a year ago, we had mapped out in very general terms what we hoped to achieve through the £100+ million BSF project in Fenland.....we all had a lot to learn about the detailed workings of BSF. A year on and our Outline Business Case (OBC) has been approved by government, and we've begun the all important process of identifying a private sector partner to work with us in delivering new and remodelled school buildings. Although OBC approval sounds (and is!) a dry and rather bureaucratic process it is important, as it is the point at which the government confirms that the project is sufficiently sound and well-organised that money can be allocated

Selecting from the bidders who express an interest in the project will be a lengthy and challenging competitive process, which involves many different strands of activity. One of the more visible and exciting areas, however, is what amounts to a design competition for our two sample schools - Neale-Wade and Thomas Clarkson Community Colleges. So, we all express our gratitude to colleagues at these two schools for the extra work they are doing on our behalf to help in the selection process.

The start of the autumn term also saw an important handover following interviews for BSF Project Director. Alan Kippax, who has worked for almost a year as BSF Project Manager, will take on the role of Project Director to see this project through the next critical phases of procurement and implementation. Kevin Manley, who has filled the BSF Project Director role since September 2006, moves to a more school-focused role to support schools through the bidder selection process.

IN AT THE DEEP END!

Just a few days after being appointed to the post of Acting Headteacher at Thomas Clarkson Community College in Wisbech Miss Strudwick was asked to host a visit by one of the companies that hoped to be involved in delivering the Building Schools for the Future project in Cambridgeshire.

The visit took place on the second day of the school summer holiday, so it was a strangely deserted and quiet set of school buildings that saw a group from a major construction company looking round to get a feel for the scope of works that BSF in Wisbech might involve.

Although the potential bidders were naturally interested in seeing the buildings and how the site might be developed, they were much more interested in hearing about how the Headteacher, governors and staff at the school saw the opportunities presented by BSF and how they thought redesigned

buildings and outdoor spaces could contribute to the school's plans to improve outcomes for young people. This led to a lively discussion about the school's vision for the future and the key role the school will have in helping young people in Wisbech and the surrounding area to achieve their full potential. Miss Strudwick spoke passionately about the importance of getting the most from this investment in the future: 'This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for this school, our Wisbech community and the surrounding villages. It's a real challenge for us to make the right decisions about what sort of facilities we will need, not just in 2012 when we hope to move into our new buildings, but for many years to come. We also want our new school to be at the heart of the community it serves and to have strong links with the town and its heritage.'

Mr Williams, Assistant Headteacher, stressed the importance to the school of continuing to strengthen community links, adding 'We have had wonderful local support

over the last year since the Thomas Clarkson Community College opened and we look forward to building on this into the future.'

Miss Strudwick paid tribute to the excellent work that Thomas Clarkson Community College students had done working with the Sorrell Foundation in identifying a number of key issues that needed to be reviewed as part of the design process. These had already been incorporated into the design brief for the new school. She now wants to make sure that the brief also includes the views of staff and parents.

Potential bidders have also visited Neale-Wade Community College in March. Thomas Clarkson and Neale-Wade Community Colleges are BSF 'sample schools'. This means that bidders work up plans for these two schools first in a competition, the results of which help decide which bidder finally wins the overall BSF contract in Cambridgeshire - worth potentially over half a billion pounds!

ALL CHANGE IN FENLAND!

Sadly, not a sound that is heard much in Fenland these days, since the Beeching cuts when so many of the rail lines that used to criss-cross Fenland were torn up. Instead it's the theme of an important piece of work that the BSF schools are engaged in with the National College of School Leadership (NCSL), based in Nottingham.

NCSL's brief is to make a difference to children's lives by helping to develop high quality leadership at all levels in school. It is already involved in the national BSF project and now wants to develop materials that can be used by schools in later BSF phases at around the time their Outline Business Case is being prepared for approval.

We were delighted in Cambridgeshire to be asked to take part in this prestigious project. The project involves experienced NCSL consultants working with a cross-section of staff from school to explore the approaches that can make best use of the new and

exciting range of facilities that will soon be built in the six BSF schools. The project will examine how all staff can play a part in making the individual BSF school visions a reality.

What makes this such a relevant project is that the focus of work is on important staff development activities that were already being planned or underway in Fenland BSF schools (see p5 for details of work already underway at Neale-Wade CC, for example). However, being involved with this national project we gain the benefit of expert consultants and attendance by school staff at two conferences, the second of which will have national and international speakers who are already well-known for their work in 'future learning'. And the icing on the cake... because it's a pilot there is no charge!!

See the website for feedback from this project in the New Year.

SCHOOLS PRESENT TO BIDDERS

On 13 June, representatives from 6 Fenland Schools attended Cambridgeshire's Bidders Conference held at Over Community Centre, which was attended by approximately 120 potential bidders. The Conference was an opportunity for companies interested in the Cambridgeshire BSF programme to hear more about our project. Presentations to the bidders were made in the morning by the Headteachers of both sample schools, Thomas Clarkson Community College and Neale-Wade Community College. This was an opportunity for bidders to hear the aspirations of both schools for the future in respect of both learning and building design. Pete Ashworth from Sir Harry Smith Community College and Andrew Field from Neale-Wade Community College made an impassioned plea to the bidders to think realistically about how ICT can be used to support learning in the future. They enthusiastically described a future where new technologies could be implemented so that knowledge could be shared more easily.

In the afternoon bidders had the opportunity to talk to teachers and students from each of the schools and to hear of their aspirations and visions for their individual schools.

WEBSITE CONTINUES TO BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

Our Building Schools for the Future website, which is a one stop shop for bidders, school staff, governors, students, parents and the wider community, continues to grow. We have already had over 36,000 hits so far this year alone. The website provides the latest information on events happening within the scope of the project.



Features include presentations from the Building Schools for the Future Bidders day held on the 13 June, and an update on the latest news and events as well as information about the schools involved in this phase.

weblink: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/fenlandbsf

We welcome your views and suggestions on the website. Please contact Liz Waring, Project Support Officer with your ideas. Email liz.waring@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

WORKSHOP | 'FIT FOR THE FUTURE BY DESIGN'

Representatives, including students and governors from Cromwell CC, Neale-Wade CC, Thomas Clarkson CC, Sir Harry Smith CC, Meadowgate and Fenland Junction as well as pupils from Cavalry Primary and Alderman Jacobs, attended a workshop on the 24 June to look at the BSF design process. Guest speakers at the event included Armando Di Finizio, Principal, of one of the first BSF schools to open in the country, Bristol Academy and Jonathan Ellis-Miller from CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment).

Pupils from both partner primary schools who attended participated fully revealing their visions for their future learning environments. Their ideas included:

- I think you would have a computer that tells you what to do and you can ask it questions
- Hand held computers that you can take anywhere
- Being respected like an adult
- Workshops after school - instead of exclusions
- Houses with mixed year groups
- Individual learning areas
- House system
- Small classes

MEADOWGATE SCHOOL – the journey so far...

Over the last six months a variety of stakeholders at Meadowgate School has continued to be involved in BSF developments, and priorities for students and staff have ebbed and flowed.

The very strong ethos of commitment and dedication from the staff continues to create an environment where students can excel in many ways and fulfil their potential. This needs to be enhanced by the provision of a variety of small spaces as well as airy classrooms for individual and group work.

“Our desired environment is one that provides maximum flexibility for learning.”

Students and staff are also very keen that ‘green’ issues are considered for all aspects of provision, so that the school can play its part in supporting environmental concerns far into the future.

To provide for meetings with parents and smaller, intimate areas for one to one work, a range of rooms and offices is required with administrative storage facilities. In addition, it is a priority that there should be excellent, accessible storage facilities at various locations throughout the school to accommodate the vast array of very large equipment needed for some of our students.

The arrival and departure arrangements for the number of students who require special transport arrangements remain challenging at Meadowgate. A large space for car parking and in/out arrival and departure points to facilitate ease of pick up and drop off



is therefore absolutely crucial. Equally importantly, an impressive frontage with high quality reception area will make our students and families feel valued and excited about their school.

Talking about ‘excited’, the school has created a new staff team to ‘Learn about Learning.’ Under the guidance and support of our BSF consultant, Mrs Jackie Beere, a voluntary team of Senior Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants has held its inaugural meeting. Initially we have recognised and voiced the importance of understanding how individuals learn: armed with this knowledge and empathy, we hope to ensure that our strategy for change is as effective and supportive as possible.

Staff and Governors have been able to enjoy several visits to other special schools to pick out examples of good practice in terms of new and renovated builds. Interestingly, although all agreed that we witnessed a number of exciting developments such as an airy and a clever dual use of wide corridors doubling up as learning areas, in many ways we all came away with solid ideas about aspects to be avoided and things we do not want!

Finally, at Meadowgate we work very closely with a host of colleagues from other agencies who are already based at the school. This remains an integral part of our Building Schools for the Future developments, and we continue to look forward to a genuinely inclusive and exciting new school!

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weblink: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/fenlandbsf

You can also email all the project team at

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INVOLVING TEACHERS IN BSF DEVELOPMENTS

Teaching staff at Neale-Wade have been meeting with the college Principal and members of the Leadership Team since the end of May. Groups of between 4 and 6 teachers have been taking part in the meetings which have had 2 main purposes.

Firstly the meetings have given everyone the opportunity to catch up on the progress that has been made on the BSF project so far. More importantly though they have also given teachers the chance to spend time thinking about ways in which they might do things differently in a new school setting. The teachers who have attended the meetings have been challenged to think about how the school could be organised differently to lead to improved outcomes for students and teachers. Arising from this the Science faculty has looked at the outcomes of the Faraday project that explored innovative ways of delivering the Science curriculum in Secondary schools. It is not always easy for teachers to imagine what life might be like in a school in which learning is undertaken in different ways. It is because of this that from September 2008 time has been built into the regular weekly meeting cycle to allow staff to develop their ideas as to how the school of the future might be different to the school of today. Should teachers have their own rooms? Will we be using books to the same extent in the school of the future? Do we need to have a set number of lessons for each subject each week? Will everyone have the same school day? Why does school start at 8.45 and finish at 3.20? These are all questions that have been posed at various meetings over the last few months and we can be certain that these questions, and others like them, will be explored in more detail over the coming months as the proposals put forward by potential partners are scrutinised further.

BSF and ICT

BSF has been at the heart of the development of a new ICT strategic plan for the Neale-Wade. Realising the need to prepare for the arrival of the managed service the college is putting in place a plan that seeks to prepare as many teachers as possible for the resources that are likely to be in place when the building finishes. Although the college hasn't been able to do as much as it hoped this year it is developing an "e-pool" of devices that staff can use to enhance the learning of their students in a variety of different settings. The college wants to take ICT to students rather than taking students to ICT. This will give students access to ICT when it is needed not just when a room is available. The college is investing in a trolley of mobile Eee PCs and hopes to buy another trolley of laptops to supplement that already in the Science faculty. On top of that, plans are in place to install a wireless network in the college and serious consideration has been given to the idea of purchasing Sony PSP and Nintendo DS games consoles to support learning in the college.

The college is clear that it wants to be able to grasp all of the opportunities available to it through BSF and the ICT Managed Service. Much of the change anticipated through BSF will depend upon the way in which ICT develops over the next few years. Already we can see the time when students arrive at school with their own ultra-mobile devices. A mobile phone is more powerful now than a PC was 20 years ago. Will we still be telling students to put their phones away in 2012 or will we be telling them to switch them on? A 3G mobile phone is a very powerful aid to teaching - given the right software it can go a long way to support learning in a range of different environments.

Curriculum Change at Neale-Wade

Staff at Neale-Wade aren't waiting for the completion of the BSF building programme to introduce innovative curriculum developments. September 2008 sees the launch of the new Secondary Curriculum and a group of staff have been working since March to develop exciting cross-curricular learning opportunities for Year 7 students. The college is introducing themed "Discovery Days" that will see year 7 students undertake extended learning on a range of topics throughout the year. A team of staff from a range of faculty areas volunteered to take part in devising and delivering the activities following a training day held at the end of March. Building on the experience of the self-managed learning programme run in years 8 and 9, the Discovery Days will personalise the experience of all year 7 students and involve them in a whole array of different activities. One set of activities was successfully trialled at the end of the summer term and we expect the Discovery Days to enthuse and motivate all year 7 students.

The model that we have introduced for Discovery Days will be just one of the curriculum initiatives introduced over the next few years. The college is gearing up for the introduction of Specialist Diplomas in ICT and Creative & Media Arts in September 2009 and consideration is already being given to how the Key Stage 3 curriculum could develop further. Specialist Diplomas mean that the college work increasingly closely with Fenland partner schools and the College of West Anglia. Over the next few years all Fenland partnership institutions will adopt a common timetable framework in Key Stages 4 and 5. Extended learning opportunities in all Key Stages will become increasingly important and the new buildings that arise out of BSF will have to be adaptable and flexible enough to allow further curriculum developments to take place.

For an insight into BSF issues at Neale-Wade visit their website:

weblink: <http://www.neale-wade.net/blog/?cat=36>

Students' views from **Sir Harry Smith Community College**

Rebecca Cronin, Head Girl, and two sixth form students, Michelle Kitchen and Rachael Weeks, give their views on the idea of change at Sir Harry Smith Community College.

Sir Harry Smith Community College is a popular and successful community school that will undergo a radical makeover in the next few years. There are certain areas in the school that are targeted for improvement, including a total change in the layout. Adopted as a school in its early productive days, the building still remains standing as a hospital design, as it was 50 years ago. With the completion of the BSF project, the school will become more accessible for its students and the community.

Areas such as the Specialist Subjects of Science and Maths could be placed near to each other to encourage cross curricular learning. Mr Richards, who has been teaching at the school for over 40 years and last year was Acting Principal, saw the changes of the school as "exciting and will help provide a better facility for the community around the school." Mr Richards and Mr Forster, who has joined the management team this year, talked about the exciting prospect of new buildings to many Key Stage 3 students. It is the younger students who are more likely to experience the gradual change of the school. We were able to gather their opinions on the idea of a new learning environment.

Tom Jones, a student in Key Stage 3, said "I think it will be a good change, because it will provide better conditions for us to learn in". Another student, Rebecca Fowler said



"If the new school is built, I think it will be exciting for the community and all the children who will attend the school. Getting more performance space will be good as I like drama."

The suggested new plans for Sir Harry introduce the idea of more space for the Creative and Performing Arts. This could include an outside theatre, a new type of stage in the main hall complete with a state of the art sound and lighting system, a recording studio, more music practice rooms and a new drama studio. These will help promote the Performing Arts events we have within the school and give the chance for the community to get involved in projects such as "Act Now" and the seasonal favourite, the Straw Bear Festival.

As with every school, our toilets are not brilliant. However with the new changes, we are looking forward to seeing the toilets transformed into hygienic, state of the art facilities.

Work has already started on a new sixth form building which should be completed by January 2009. This will provide excellent facilities for sixth form students. By the time the school has been transformed by the BSF project, this facility will become a

welcoming community centre for the people of Whittlesey.

With the school consulting with staff and students about the future of the buildings, the newly appointed Principal, Mr Digby commented "We are intending that the BSF project will have a real impact on the quality of learning taking place at Sir Harry Smith CC and will make the students' learning and social experience a much better one. We want to create mature independent, thinking students who will take more responsibility for their own learning. We want to equip them to succeed in their learning journey from year 7 to 13 and beyond."

As sixth form students, we believe the prospect of change to the school will not only benefit current students, but all those who join the college in future years. There is a great atmosphere in our school, but we believe the changes will further improve the students' education and help them along the way of a great career.

Over the next few years, Sir Harry Smith Community College will develop the facilities that the students and community deserve. We want to see a school that will enhance students' learning and inspire them to achieve their potential. We want to see the new buildings broaden young students' horizons and allow them to succeed.

"exciting and will help provide a better facility for the community around the school."



FENLAND JUNCTION BSF

The staff and students at the Fenland Junction have continued to work to develop our vision for the future. A new build is planned for the Fenland Junction and as a site has not yet been secured we have used the 'lull' to think about what we want our school to be like in 2010 onwards.

Staff have worked with our consultant to develop an educational vision for the Fenland Junction which formed part of the project's Strategy for Change document. The vision for Fenland Junction as a centre of excellence in preparing 'at risk' students for adult life encompasses some of the innovative thinking around the 'studio schools' which aims to allow students to learn and gain qualifications alongside working in and running real business activities within the school. Students will play an important role in co-designing their courses so that the

products created can be marketed and thereby a commercial awareness will be developed. This would include examples such as running a local market stall or offering beauty services to the local community in order to connect learning with the outside world and the local community. Our aim is to teach them the responsibilities of adults through the world of work.

Taking our curriculum as a starting point we have developed our ideas to encompass the importance of the vocational provision of Fenland Junction means that practical workshops specialising in engineering and hair and beauty for small groups would be available on site. These could all link in with the business function of the school. It is important that students also have the opportunity to acquire accreditation in the core subjects English, Maths and Science, alongside ICT and other optional subjects from this starting point we have developed a five

year curriculum plan to allow staff to be 'ready' to deliver this changing curriculum. BSF has made us think carefully about where we are going and how we are going to get there!

Students have been consulted about the things they like about school and the things they would like. The survey brought up some important trends such as the real need for good quality outside space (which we do not have at present) and the ability to do more practical learning. Students liked the smaller groups we currently ran and the ethos of the school where they feel they are treated like adults. Our new building will need to address these issues.

Caroline, our head teacher has visited a number of schools to gather ideas of what is possible and has presented these to staff - who are now engaged in thinking of ways of translating our vision into bricks and mortar.

'Student Voice' at Cromwell Community College

Jane McGregor, School Improvement Consultant at Cromwell Community College reflects on the significance of developing the 'Student Voice' as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme

Cromwell Community College in Fenland is committed to developing student voice within the college and beyond. There is a vibrant school council, attended by the Headteacher and representatives from all year groups. Students have been at all major BSF meetings, making substantial contributions to the discussions. and expressing their desire to extend consultations to the whole student body in time.

A recent consultation exercise with some students around teaching and learning came up with some significant suggestions about how teaching and learning could progress further in our Fenland 'Schools for the Future' Six students from years 8 & 10 discussed their learning & teaching experiences and then went on to take photographs around the school of where they felt there were positive learning environments. This will inform later work with staff and also the BSF team following the Sorrell Foundation initiatives with the sample schools of Neil Wade & Thomas Clarkson'.

There were three main questions:

Q. How do I learn best?

- Quite quiet but with somebody who understands (could be less formal)
- Someone telling me & then I can come back (does not have to be quiet)
- Group work- getting into each other's ideas
- Explaining, then coming back after reflection

Q. What are good learning environments?

- Friendly (polite/kind)
- Calm & comfortable atmosphere rather than cramped & rushed
- Safe, friendly & relaxed-do what you want & what you are told
- Flexible e.g. re classes
- Colour interest
- Different school trips
- Light- not feeling trapped
- Places that are physically comfortable e.g. re furniture
- Bright & welcoming

Q. What makes a good teacher?

- Someone who is passionate & wants you to do well
- Makes a good relationship with the class (x2)
- Someone you could talk to if you had a problem



weblink: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/fenlandbsf

STUDENTS VISIT LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS



So far Tom & Paige have visited Cavalry Primary in March and Townley Primary in Christchurch. Further visits are planned to other feeder schools in September.

Students from **Neale-Wade Community College** in March, have been visiting local primary schools to explain all about the new Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme. Paige Webb (Y8) and Tom Searle (Y10) are both part of the pupil client team at Neale-Wade and have been heavily involved with The Sorrell Foundation, a charity that encourages young people to share ideas about design and architecture. Paige and Tom's task was to explain to future Neale-Wade students how the new college might look after the BSF

make-over and how it has been important for real students to have THEIR say about the new design. The visits took the form of a short presentation by Tom & Paige followed by a lively Q&A session where the primary pupils asked firstly, are the teachers scary?! Once reassured about how nice the staff were they went on to ask... **Will there be a swimming pool? Will it be hard to find my way around? Are there after school clubs? Will it be environmentally friendly? Will the sports facilities be good? What will the classrooms be like?**



BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE – KEY DATES

- Preferred Bidders selected Autumn **2009**
- Contract signed with preferred bidder to work alongside the County Council to build our new schools – called a Local Education Partnership (or LEP) – late 2009/early 2010
- Building starts – at first schools in **2010**
- Building complete at all schools **2013**

BSF News is produced by

Cambridgeshire County Council, Castle Court, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP

If you would like further copies of this newsletter, or the text on audio cassette, in Braille, large print or other languages, please contact Dawn Rogers on **01223 699220** or email: dawn.rogers@cambridgeshire.gov.uk