



# Insite

Partnerships for Schools  
Quarterly  
Summer 2007





## Message from Tim Byles, Chief Executive

Welcome to the second edition of *Insite*.

We have had a busy few months at PfS since our **Annual Conference in March**.

The project update page will give you more details about what's happening in BSF and Academies, but one highlight of the past few months is the Memoranda of Understanding that I have now signed with the Chief Executive of every Wave 4 local authority. This document confirms our mutual obligations and respective roles and responsibilities in delivering BSF.

Another highlight is that we have reached the milestone of ten local authorities at financial close. The pace of delivery of BSF has accelerated considerably over recent months, which is excellent news not just for PfS, but also for the students, teachers and wider communities of the 139 schools that will benefit in these areas.

I continue to spend as much time as I can out and about, visiting projects in Leeds, Lewisham, Bristol and Sunderland. Oxclose Community School in Washington, Sunderland, is the first BSF project in the local authority to open, as a result of quick-win funding. It is also the first refurbishment project I have visited, and I was very impressed with what the local authority have done, adding a new multi-media resource centre and a performing arts suite to the schools facilities.

The team has also spent time advising and supporting the Wave 5 and 6 local authorities who are due to enter BSF shortly.

And of course we now have a new Prime Minister. In his 11th and final Mansion House address as Chancellor, Gordon Brown pledged that education would be a top priority for him, and outlined plans to make education in Britain "world class", in order to meet the challenges of globalisation. He also said businesses should be involved in every school, and backed the Academies programme.

We are now working with a new Secretary of State, Ed Balls, and a new Department: the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

As ever, we welcome your comments on this edition of *Insite*. We have made a decision 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



# Project update & news

## Waves 1-3

By the end of July ten BSF projects had reached financial close: Solihull, Leeds, Newcastle and Sheffield having signed with their delivery partners since the last edition of *Insite*. Several more projects are in the final stage of procurement, at or around Preferred Bidder, of which we expect seven to reach financial close in the next few months. Three local authorities have even started construction before reaching final close, through advance work orders. This shows great commitment and partnership working with all parties.

Almost all of the Wave 1-3 projects will be in procurement by the end of 2007, and the first BSF project to be procured under the new competitive dialogue regulations, Islington, has reached selected bidder stage.

The first BSF school to be procured through a LEP, Speedwell Technical College in Bristol, will officially be opening in September, as Brunel Bristol Academy. Pictures of the opening ceremony will be in the next edition of *Insite*.

## Wave 4

Almost all of the Wave 4 projects, including repeat projects already in Waves 1-3, have now submitted the first part of their Strategy for Change (SfC) – the combined education and estate strategy that underpins BSF.

Tim Byles has now met with all of the Wave 4 local authority Chief Executives and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with each of them.

## Wave 5

Regional workshops were held in June to assist the Wave 5 BSF local authorities in preparing to submit their SfC part one. The official Wave 5 launch is scheduled for autumn 2007.

## Wave 6

Regional workshops for Wave 6 local authorities were held in July, to give them feedback on their Readiness to Deliver submissions and to meet the teams from PfS, DCSF and the Office of the Schools Commissioner.

## Academies

We are currently engaged with 35 different local authorities on 56 projects across the country. The level of framework projects continues to rise rapidly, with the current estimated number through the pipeline approximately 80 – double the original estimate.

The Academies Team at PfS has established an internal peer review process to assess the Outline Business Cases of the local authorities that are using our national framework.

Milton Keynes and Southwark have already received approval to proceed to procurement, and are currently engaged with our private sector bidders in shortlisting processes.

Darlington is presently within the internal approval system.

Additionally, the BSF programmes of Sunderland and Middlesbrough are being delivered through the national framework and are assisting with the road-testing of the standard documents. It is a significant milestone getting these projects to market.



# Delivering Academies

Colin Howell,  
Academies Director, PfS

It is now just over a year since ministers announced changes to the delivery model for the procurement and delivery of the Academies Programme. These changes placed Academy delivery within the Building Schools for the Future Programme and importantly repositioned local authorities as commissioners of services.

Over the past year, PfS has secured an agreed delivery model for Academies covering both BSF areas and those not currently targeted for BSF until later. We have also been working closely with colleagues in DCSF to ensure policy and delivery objectives are achieved and are complementary.

In terms of delivery, there are three distinct categories:

- Existing Academies development;
- Academies being developed in BSF areas through the Local Education Partnership (LEP) or other local education framework; or
- Academies that are being brought forward in non LEP areas.

There are currently 87 Academies being procured in the historic way and these will continue on this basis.

We forecast that 100 Academies will be developed through existing LEPs, or LEPs that are to be established. These will be developed through the LEP Strategic Partnering Agreement in the normal way and will be funded on the same basis as all BSF schools.



There are then a further 94 Academies that fall in areas that are not scheduled to enter the BSF programme for some time. For these areas, we have procured a national design and construction framework together with supporting contractual documentation and processes that will deliver Academies in a timely, consistent and a value-for-money manner. The framework was launched by Lord Adonis in January this year and we are now seeing its use in Sunderland, Darlington, Milton Keynes, Middlesbrough and Southwark as they bring their schemes forward.

Once the first contract has been finalised, we will look to give feedback to the market on any lessons learned. To date, the majority of issues appear to stem from familiarity with the process rather than any fundamental disagreement. To help address this we have regular meetings with Sponsors and frameworks contractors.

### The Academies team at Pfs:

Academies Director: Colin Howell  
 National Programme Manager: David Burns  
 Commercial Manager: Dapo Obatusin  
 Project managers: Simon Brown, Andy Farrell, Sohini Shah, Rachel Stephenson.  
 Design Managers: Jill Swales, Chris Terry.

### National framework contractors:

- Balfour Beatty
- Carillion
- Kier
- Laing O'Rourke
- Skanska
- Wilmott Dixon





# Keeping up standards

When Tim Byles announced at the PPF 5th Annual Education Partnerships Conference in April that Building Schools for the Future aims to tackle bullying through innovative design, there was something of a media flurry. This was no traditional bully ban plan – the idea was to overhaul student toilets.

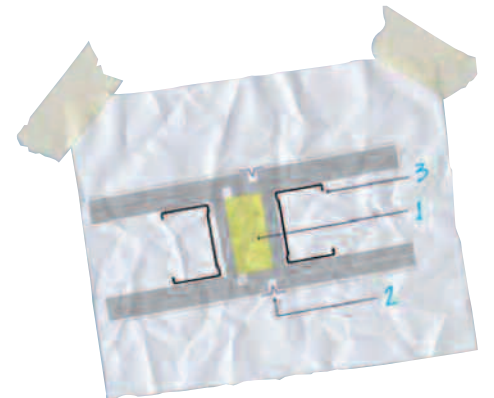
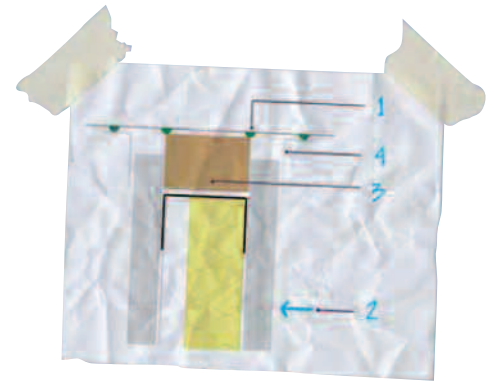
Because of their relative seclusion from teachers' watchful eyes, school toilets have long been a haven for the bully; the thought is that better building design will give them less opportunity to lurk and target their peers

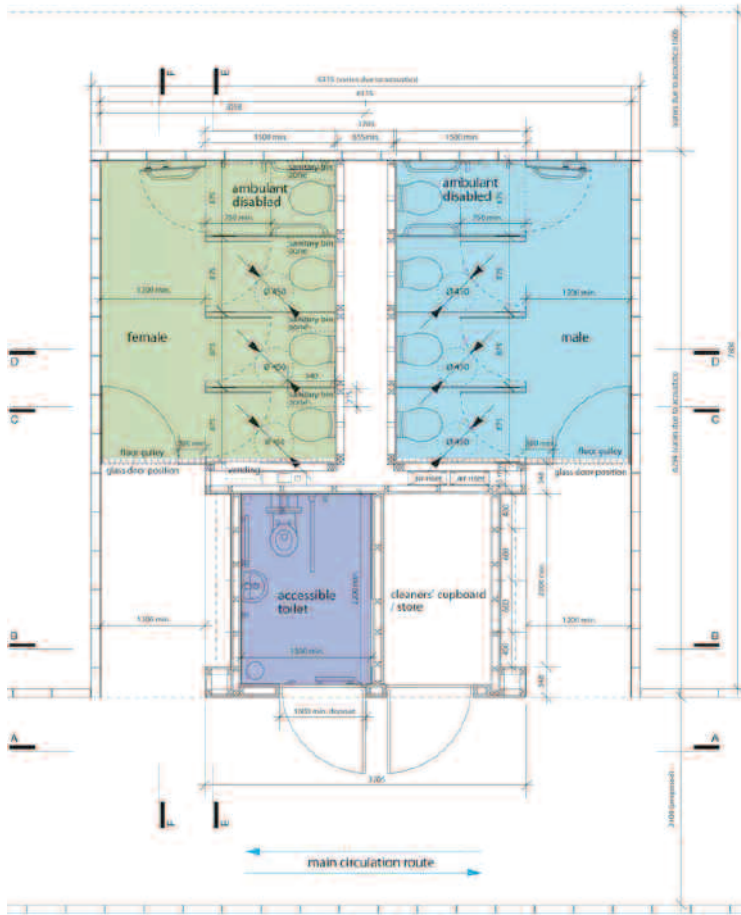
But exactly what kind of designs will lead to bully-free toilets? It's all outlined in a new standard specifications document, *Toilets in schools*, which was released in June. Suggestions include scrapping urinals and having unisex sink areas outside cubicles that are open or visible to the corridor.

Standardising design is not just about preventing bullying, however. Whether building toilets or tennis courts, schools can use standard specifications in new builds and refurbishments so they can be certain that their new facilities are of the highest quality. Design teams will not need to 'reinvent the wheel' and can spend their time on design issues that are more specific to the school's needs. Contractors will also know the quality they and their competitors must achieve, and as manufacturers recognise this is always the requirement, they can produce good-quality standardised components at reasonable costs.

*Toilets in schools* is one of the first three documents covering standard specifications for components. *Partitions in schools* and *Floor finishes in schools* have also been released, and all have been sent to local authorities. Similar publications on lighting, doorsets and stairs are out shortly, and later issues will include windows, plant rooms and heating.

The guidance documents set out standards of performance, and design examples show how they might be delivered. Although the publication is detailed, the authors stress they don't want to stifle innovation by being too prescriptive. Each specification is output-based so future design solutions can satisfy the requirements – no single solution is insisted on.





The standard documents are produced by the Standard Specifications, Layouts and Dimensions (SSLD) Forum, a DCSF group of school designers, clients and manufacturers that consider how standard specifications, layouts and dimensions can help to deliver consistently high-quality environments, while also offering better whole-life value for money.

Each component in the standard documents has been discussed in detail between representatives of the relevant industries and school clients, and also draws on best practice both here and abroad.

Partnerships for Schools was a key player in the Forum, represented by design manager Beech Williamson. Rather than use regulations, the DCSF considers that the most effective way to ensure these standards are adopted in every school is to include them in the Pfs standard Output Specification, which is being updated for use in Wave 4 of BSF and beyond. This allows schools to 'opt out' if they wish, but should also give the market enough certainty of orders and offer the flexibility to develop and improve specifications over time.

Standardisation of the functional components of a building rather than a whole school design won't create identikit schools all over England. Instead, it frees the architects and designers to develop original and exciting plans for the learning spaces, social areas, community facilities and entrances of schools, without getting bogged down in the detail of specifying every single sink fitting or electric socket.

## The Guidelines

### *Toilets in schools*

Recognises many school washrooms are currently substandard, and suggests using high-quality fittings and incorporating pupils' designs to promote respect for the area.

### *Floor finishes in schools*

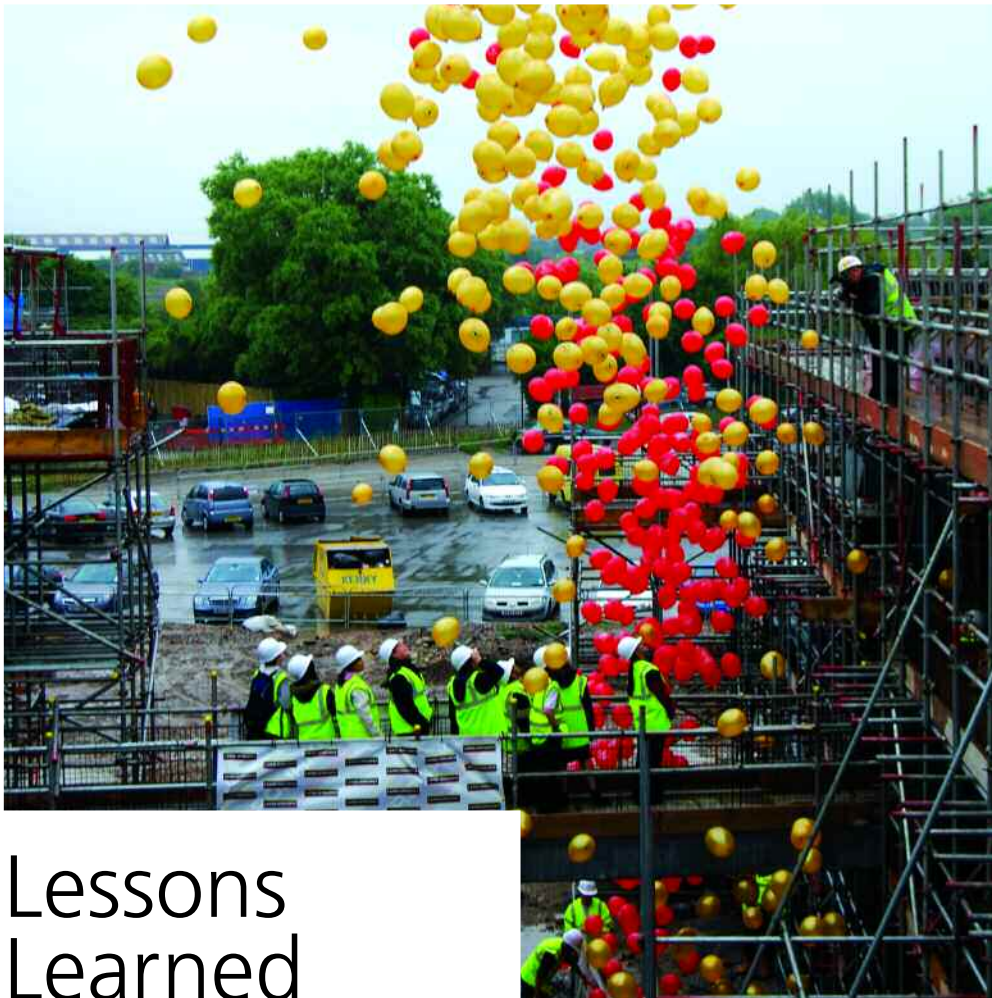
Focuses on the properties of flooring, including acoustics, slip resistance and durability. It describes five categories of flooring that should be used – general, light, heavy, wet area and hall – and gives a detailed list of where they should be applied.

### *Partitions in schools*

Outlines how non-load-bearing partitions should be used, and urges a design that makes it easy for caretakers and facility managers to maintain and repair them. Five types of partition are described and suggestions of where they should be used are given.

Have a look at the guidance yourself – the documents can be downloaded from: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk>.





Picture: Balloons are released in a 'topping out' ceremony at Manchester's Gorton Education Village. Have you celebrated your BSF successes in similar ways? We'd love to hear from you.

# Lessons Learned

For BSF to be successful at both a national and local level, it is essential we continue to learn from experience and share that learning with the key stakeholders in the programme.

In addition to the Lessons Learned research PFS conducted and published at our Annual Conference, we have recently launched dedicated pages on our website, covering all aspects of BSF. The 'Lessons Learned' pages provide high-level key tips and case studies covering the entire BSF programme.

In compiling these pages, we have drawn on the experiences of Pathfinder local authorities and bidders, as well as feedback from PFS, the DCSF, 4ps and PUK to help benefit those entering BSF now and in later waves.



These lessons learned and the experiences of Pathfinder and Wave 1 BSF local authorities have already been used to inform processes and the development of the BSF programme. The criteria for the Waves 4-6 'Readiness to Deliver' document were developed using input from local authorities in the early waves of BSF. Core guidance on the Outline Business Case (OBC) and Strategy for Change (SfC) has also been developed and revised in the light of the experiences of the Pathfinder projects.

We are hoping to build a library of case studies to illustrate our Lessons Learned, and welcome contributions from all stakeholders. If you've held a successful Bidders Day, run an innovative consultation programme or worked in partnership with non-BSF funding partners, please let us know.



You can find the new web pages at [www.partnershipsforschools.org.uk](http://www.partnershipsforschools.org.uk) – we hope you find them useful, and welcome any feedback you may have.





# Delivery in action: the story of change

Jim Knight (upper and lower right) and Tim Byles (upper left) meet students and try out the new facilities at Oxclose Community School.

Oxclose Community School was officially opened on 20 June by Jim Knight MP and Tim Byles. Oxclose is the first school in Sunderland to benefit from the BSF programme and will be followed by a further eight schools benefiting from £120m investment.

The £10.6m refurbishment, which has Visual and Performing Arts status, has not only turned it into a centre of learning excellence with a multi-media resource centre, performing arts suite and state of the art computing equipment, but will also make the school a focal point for the community outside of school hours.

## The new school now accommodates:

- New Performing Arts block with up-to-date dance, drama and music facilities. This includes dance and drama studios, a suite of hi-tech music rooms and recording and video editing studios, as well as a suite of eight music practice rooms for individual or group work.
- Learning Resource Centre for personalised learning fitted out with ICT equipment to support online learning. The centre is designed to develop independent learning skills through innovative and motivating lessons, personalised to meet the needs of each student.
- Social spaces and flexible learning areas.
- New main entrance: pictured above, lower left.
- Extended and improved dining area.
- Refurbished specialist areas throughout the school – all classrooms have a high level of ICT, including interactive white boards and radio networking. Specialist areas in science and technology offer new academic and vocational learning for students.

At the opening, Headteacher Mike Foster said: "We are delighted with the results of the BSF project at Oxclose Community School. It is important to remember that this is a transformational teaching and learning project and that everything we have done to the building has had the future of learning for our students at the heart of the process. I would like to thank students, parents, staff, governors and everyone involved in the project. It hasn't always been easy but we now have an excellent base from which to develop educational opportunity for all".

Welcoming the opening, Tim Byles said: "BSF will transform the learning environments for pupils, teachers and local communities across the country, and I congratulate Sunderland on the opening of Oxclose today. The new facilities and technology will help young people reach for excellence and unlock the talent that every single one of them has. BSF will make a real and tangible difference to the life chances of every young person across the country and I very much look forward to hearing about the difference it makes in Sunderland in the near future".

# Diary Dates

## PfS Dispatches

### Chief Executives Advisory Group

The second meeting of the CEAG took place on 5 June. The discussion focused on how to make the National Learning Network an operational reality. Further details of the NLN will be provided in the next edition of *Insite*.

### ICT

Becta, the Government's technology agency and a key partner on BSF, published the results of a four-year study, showing high levels of computer technology in schools can improve attainment. The **ICT Test Bed project** was piloted in three deprived areas of England, and showed gains in some GCSE and primary school test scores. For more information go to: <http://www.evaluation.icctestbed.org.uk/>

### Leading Learning

We followed up February's 'Leading Learning in London with BSF' conference with a stimulating workshop on 'Transforming Learning in Practice with ICT' at the Camden City Learning Centre on 25 June. The heavily oversubscribed workshop was attended by local authority officers, headteachers, teachers and governors, as well as representatives from DCSF, Futurelab, Intel and Becta.

A thought-provoking session from John Davitt, educational specialist, was followed by an introduction from Hannah Green on the DEMOS research, 'Their Space', which focuses on children's perspectives of technology. Simon Shaw from Becta led a practical session on the Becta Quality Indicators, and the workshop ended with a video link to Bristol where Ayleen Driver, Bristol CLC Director, gave a challenging talk on educational transformation and the role of new technologies.

This workshop was the first of a regular termly session that will respond to the priorities and needs of London local authorities and schools involved in BSF. Future sessions will continue to focus on education transformation and support for change management, with opportunities for practical workshops, networking and surgeries on specific aspects of BSF development processes that are requested by delegates.

## 2007

25-27 September  
Leisure Industry Week  
NEC, Birmingham

Sports Development Week is co-located with Leisure Industry Week, the key UK event for the leisure and sports industry. Tim Byles will deliver a keynote address on 25 September. For more information go to [www.liw.co.uk](http://www.liw.co.uk).

10 October

LGC Emap Conference: Building Schools for the Future

Earls Court Exhibition Centre, London  
Tim Byles will deliver the keynote address at this conference for schools and local authorities. The event will focus on providing the practical details and in-depth knowledge needed to understand the evolving BSF stages and how to move things forward.

For full details visit: [www.emapeducation.com](http://www.emapeducation.com)

28-30 November

SSAT Annual Conference  
NEC, Birmingham

The annual conference of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. Tim Byles will speak on the work PfS has undertaken on the Academies programme since taking on responsibility for its delivery in March 2006. For more information, go to [www.specialistschools.org.uk](http://www.specialistschools.org.uk)

## 2008

9-12 January

BETT  
Olympia, London

PfS will be at BETT, the educational technology show, again in 2008, in the 'Policy in Practice' zone with our key government partners. We will also be participating in the seminar programme that Emap are currently working on. More information will be available soon from the PfS website, or see [www.bett2008.com](http://www.bett2008.com) for more details

12-13 February

BSEC  
Manchester Central, Manchester

The Building Schools Exhibition and Conference (BSEC) moves to Manchester this year. PfS will once again be in attendance, supporting the event with a stand and in the seminar programme. Tim Byles will be giving keynote speeches at the two-day conference.

All BSF local authorities are being offered a complimentary stand at the exhibition – an ideal way to showcase projects to the market and to meet potential bidders. Further details are available from [www.buildingschools.co.uk](http://www.buildingschools.co.uk).



# In conversation with Jim Knight

*What will success in BSF and the Academies programme look like?*

Record investment in the school estate has already seen 1100 brand-new or rebuilt schools opened and over 27,000 classrooms refurbished. But BSF is taking this even further, so we can ensure that every secondary school is bang up to date and properly equipped to serve the local community. Success is not simply opening schools on time and on budget – it means ensuring we get it right for tomorrow's pupils and teachers, as well as today's. This huge investment must transform education.

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

This is an unprecedented school building programme – the biggest in 50 years. It is a once-in-a-generation investment to give millions of pupils, now and in the future, the quality of facilities that they need to achieve and succeed. But it isn't just about bricks and mortar. We expect every local authority to take this opportunity to completely rethink how they deliver their secondary education – from what schools teach to how they do it – that's why some of our investment will help headteachers to articulate their own educational vision. It's critical that teachers and pupils help to shape their schools. Designs must be innovative but practical and workable.

*At the January 2007 launch event for Wave 4 BSF local authorities, you said that "the thinking behind Building Schools for the Future is... design for education's sake". Which aspect of design do you consider will have the most impact on education in the future?*

It's increasingly recognised that effective design and quality buildings can make an important contribution to higher standards and better schools. Welcoming entrances invite parents in. Wider corridors can improve movement and eradicate the dark corners that act as a haven for bullies. Open classrooms with good light, acoustics and ventilation improve concentration and, of course, modern and striking buildings can be a source of great pride to communities – especially those who have been more used to neglect and deprivation. All this makes it easier for teachers to get the best out of pupils.

*How does BSF fit in with the wider education agenda?*

It is vitally important that the way schools are designed support all the other objectives that we are trying to achieve. For example, they need to reflect the needs of the wider community in order to offer extended services like childcare and adult learning. We need spaces that can be tailored to support personalised learning and evolving teaching styles. And remember we are not just building schools for the young people of today, we need to think of the future. While we can't predict what design will best suit the classrooms of 2020, we do need to plan for different eventualities. And I want schools to be models of energy efficiency and renewable energy with low carbon footprints.

*How can BSF help to deliver personalised learning?*

The watchword is flexibility. BSF is a great opportunity to design learning spaces that are flexible and can support a range of approaches to teaching and learning. We need spaces that can be adapted to the needs of individual children, and that can be used for more than one purpose, such as breakout areas that can be used for group-work or social space. The BSF investment in technology can broaden the learning materials that children can access, and provide greater opportunities for collaboration.

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

I am very proud to be elected to parliament. Before I became a Minister I was an active campaigner for road safety and helped secure new legislation to crack down on bad drivers. Over the past year I've been involved in really important developments, which I believe will secure lasting changes in schools. For example: new legislation to give teachers the powers they wanted to do more on behaviour, the new school standards, the new exciting diploma qualifications. Travelling around the country seeing the impact of our capital investment in new and transformed buildings is very satisfying.