



partnerships for schools
building schools for the future

This case study focuses on how Beaumont Leys School in Leicester used students to induct the intake of Years 7, 8 and 9 (630 in total) into their new school.

The case study will show how such an approach can have a huge impact on creating a sense of student ownership of a new building which, in turn, has significant implications for the way the building feels, and is treated, after the move is completed.

Key project information

Local authority: Leicester City
School: Beaumont Leys School
No. of students: 1,050
BSF Wave: Wave 1 Phase 1
Cost: £14.3 million
School opened: April 2009
Project timescale: First BSF school to open in East Midlands, delivered six weeks early

An adult-free student induction to a BSF new build school

Project description

Beaumont Leys School moved into a new building in April 2009, six weeks ahead of schedule. It is one of four schools in Leicester's Wave 1 BSF project. The other schools which are also open are Fullhurst Community College, Soar Valley and Judgemeanow Colleges.

From the start the senior leadership team was determined that there would be a change of culture in the new school, and that students would play a key role in this change. The school spent two years preparing students for the culture shift they would experience when they moved to their new school in 2009, but without them necessarily knowing that this was what was happening. The Transition Programme accelerated in the term prior to the move.

The most effective stakeholder engagement took place during the migration from the old school to the new, where much work was done on school culture; on deciding what the school wanted to leave behind, what it wanted to bring across from the old to the new, and what it wanted to build on.

Senior staff held a series of assemblies relating to ethos, values and culture. Student Leadership was used in a dramatic and innovative way in that 82 Year 7 and 10 students had total ownership of the induction of over 600 students into the new school. This critical phase of the school's BSF project was entirely dependent on student engagement. Staff's capacity to complete the migration successfully was increased by students looking after each other. This was a high-risk, high-trust experiment which was entirely successful and has led to a strong sense of ownership and pride in the students as they see themselves as 'Custodians of the Future.'

Who was involved?

Two Assistant Headteachers created a detailed three part induction programme which covered:

- Building familiarisation
- Smart Card Tour
- ICT induction.

All teachers were trained to deliver one part of the induction programme.

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The Student Induction Programme was staggered across three days: Thursday, Friday and Monday. All Year 10 and 11 tutor groups were divided into three and inducted by teaching staff.

Forty-two Year 10 students were trained by the two Assistant Headteacher to do exactly the same as the teaching staff had done. The Year 10 students worked in pairs and inducted 210 Year 7 students without any adult support. The Year 10 students each chose a Year 7 student and trained them to deliver the Induction Programme. These 84 Year 7 and 10 students, then inducted the remaining 420 Year 8 and 9 students again without any adult support.

The issues and how they were tackled

The key challenges of moving into the new school were:

- Creating capacity for staff to unpack 1,800 packing crates, complete their own induction, undertake comprehensive ICT training, induct students into the school whilst also continuing to teach Year 11 students who were six weeks away from taking their GCSEs.
- Creating a student induction programme that was manageable and effective and which would result in students settling in very quickly with little loss of learning time.
- Establishing a strong sense of culture, ownership and pride in students from the moment they walked through the door, so that they would see themselves as custodians of the building.

What the school did

The school created three choreographed and scripted tours each of which lasted about 20 minutes:

1. A tour which familiarised students with the location of key rooms: dining room, hall, toilets, pastoral offices, sports hall, classrooms, inclusion suite etc.
2. A Smart Card tour which showed students all the things they could do with their smart cards: cashless catering, E-Registration, library, printing.
3. An ICT tour where they were given their passwords and log-ins and shown how to use the Managed Learning Environment and send things to printing.

Each tour had a PowerPoint presentation for training, and guides were given hard copies. Each tour also had a script and stage directions which included important points about the culture of the school and the thinking behind certain design features e.g. the school is full of

internal windows because it is one community with nothing hidden.

Each tour had a different starting point to avoid human jams e.g. some would start on the second floor, some would start at the Sports Centre etc. The effect of this was the building was a glorious weaving of induction tours criss-crossing each other but never clashing. This was even more impressive when it was students inducting students.

- All staff were 'walked through' the tour and rehearsed the script.
- Students were called Student Teachers.
- Each Year 10 student chose a Year 7 student that they wanted to work with based on the impression they had given during their induction.
- Once the Induction was handed over to the students there really were no adults involved.
- Whilst the students were inducting the students the adults were either teaching or unpacking or putting up displays. This was an enormous help.

Costs

The only thing that this cost was the time to plan, choreograph and script the tours. There were no other costs.

Outcome and impact

In the old school, despite the staff's best efforts, there was a sense of separation between the students and the school. The buildings were shabby and incoherent with little sense of ownership by students.

The benefits of this method of Student Induction have been tangible in that students settled into the new building immediately. This was helped by the fact that there were 120 large framed photographs of them in their old school displayed throughout the whole school: the old sitting within the new.

Students being given such a central role meant that there could be no clearer signal that they were being trusted and they rose to the challenge. Even those students who weren't Student Teachers could see that their peers were being entrusted with this important responsibility.

Beaumont Leys is in a challenging area, however in the six months since the school opened there has been very little damage. The school believes that this is a direct result of their high-risk, but hugely successful, decision to make students an integral part of the move, so that it is palpably clear that it is their school.

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Top Tips

- Start preparing for the change of culture long before the move takes place.
- Think about what you want to take from the old culture and involve students.
- Prepare meticulously, spell things out and leave nothing to chance.
- Be brave, take risks, trust that students will do the right thing, at the right time and in the right way.

Key contact

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Further information

More information about Beaumont Leys Schools can be found at: www.beaumontleys.leicester.sch.uk