



partnerships for schools

building schools for the future

This case study looks at how students across the London Borough of Camden are helping to shape their schools of the future.

It focuses on students taking part in the Sorrell Foundation's Joinedupdesign for Schools programme, and how they have become BSF ambassadors within their learning communities.

### Key project information

**Local authority:** Camden

**BSF Wave:** Wave 5

**No of schools:** 15

**Type of schools:** Nine existing secondary schools, 1 new secondary school (UCL sponsored academy), 3 special schools and 2 pupil referral units

**Project cost:** £250m

## Student engagement in Camden BSF: working with the Sorrell Foundation

### Project description

Over a five-month period in 2008 students from from secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units across Camden took part in the Sorrell Foundation's Joinedupdesign for Schools programme to gain an insight into what constitutes good design. The culmination of the project was a feedback event at the Roundhouse theatre, where students were able to share their vision for Camden's schools of the future with their peers, teachers, architects and the community.

### Project aims

Camden decided to work with the Sorrell Foundation's established Joinedupdesign for Schools programme to not only give its students a greater understanding of design issues and the vocabulary to articulate their thoughts and those of their peers, but to create a cohort of students across all the schools in the borough - including SEN schools and PRUs - who

would become 'ambassadors' for BSF and the transformation that would be happening in their schools.

### Joinedupdesign for BSF

The Joinedupdesign for School process can be used for any type of school design project, whether it is part of the Building Schools for the Future programme, an academy or part of the Primary Capital Programme. It can also be used for smaller projects, such as re-designing a school uniform, better signage, re-naming a school, or finding new storage solutions.

For the Joinedupdesign for School process to give its best results, the Sorrell Foundation suggests it should be used in its full form and started at the beginning of design development as part of the overall vision and brief, before any design decisions are made. The process works best if students are completely involved at all stages in a genuine, extended dialogue with architects and designers.

# Student engagement in Camden BSF

In Joinedupdesign for BSF, a client team of pupils follows a creative process of research, meetings and discussions to create a brief which tells the school architects and designers exact what they want from their school of the future. The process is adapted from the Joinedupdesign for Schools model and also provides opportunities for students to develop life skills such as problem-solving, team working, and communication.

## Working with the Sorrell Foundation

The Sorrell Foundation's Young Design Centre in Somerset House, near London's South Bank, served as an inspiring introduction for students about the variety of architectural styles which can be used to create different spaces and moods.

Students from 10 Camden schools took part in a range of activities, including workshops at the Young Design Centre, visits to inspirational public buildings as well as numerous opportunities to speak directly with

architects to understand how space, colour and other design choices influence behaviour, attitudes and a sense of well-being.

Students not only got a chance to talk about design with the professionals, they were encouraged to act as BSF ambassadors in their schools, informing their peers about BSF and soliciting ideas from them which could be passed on to architects, builders and designers. They then produced a 'pupil brief' setting out the key issues and challenges that students identified in their school, and how they would like to see things changed.

The students were then invited to present their ideas to an audience of head teachers, governors, councillors, parents, architects and school design advisers at the north London theatre in November. Students from each of the 10 schools involved with the Sorrell Foundation took to the stage to share their ideas, getting a chance to demonstrate their communication and presentation skills as well as their vision.

## Staff and council views on the student engagement process

*"We've given our ideas and I want to see what the architects come up with. I'd like to see what they do with the space at our school and it'll be very rewarding to see our ideas become a reality."*

**Charlie Tilley, Year 8 student at Acland Burghley School**

*"It's been a really good experience. Meeting with the architects made me realise how you can take the challenges at the school and make your own solutions. We've contributed lots of innovative ideas for the new school. Most of the students at Maria Fidelis are aware that the school is being rebuilt in the future and are really excited about it."*

**Ani Bhagtiani, Year 11 student at Maria Fidelis RC School for Girls**

*"Our programme of student engagement is a hugely important part of the BSF process in Camden, and is providing opportunities over and above ensuring that we design and build schools which we can be proud of."*

*"We have been overwhelmed by the fresh energy and ideas generated by the students, which goes to show just why their involvement is crucial. Not only are we involving the very people that BSF is designed to benefit, but through a programme of consultation and discussion with their peers, awareness of BSF and interest in the programme is spread throughout the school population."*

**Andrew Mennear, Camden's Executive Member for Schools**

*"The programme has given us fantastic material that will really help us in transforming the way our children and young people learn, as well as our buildings. Camden's pupil briefs now form part of our Outline Business Case and we aim to involve the students in our procurement processes, such as interviewing bidders and evaluating the bids."*

*"It was great to see so many young people working together on what they wanted for their fellow pupils, and particularly rewarding to see students from the pupil referral units giving articulate presentations at the Roundhouse and taking an obvious pride in what they'd achieved."*

**Janet Grauberg, Camden's Executive Member for Children and Young People**

# Student engagement in Camden BSF

## Key contact

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## Further information

Copies of the student briefs produced as part of the work with the Sorrell Foundation are available through the Camden's BSF website.

Camden's BSF website includes more information about the Camden BSF programme, links to newsletters, latest news, and information for schools and bidders.

[www.camden.gov.uk/bsf/](http://www.camden.gov.uk/bsf/)

For more information about the Sorrell Foundation, see [www.thesorrellfoundation.com/](http://www.thesorrellfoundation.com/)