



partnerships for schools

This case study looks at how Morpeth School is a good example of the impact of cultural learning and partnership working on a whole school. The school has embedded a whole-school teaching and learning approach that they have named 'The five R's'¹ (Resilience, Responsibility, Reasoning, Resourcefulness and Reflectiveness).

Key project information

School: Morpeth School

Age range: 11-16 and Sixth Form

No. of students: 1,154

Location: Urban

School type: Community School

Specialisms: Specialist School for the Arts (Art, Drama and Music) and a Training school

Free school meals: 67 per cent

Ofsted: Outstanding, November 2008

Local authority: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Cultural learning and the impacts of partnership working

Background

Located in Bethnal Green, Tower Hamlets, Morpeth is a mixed, eight form entry, larger than average school. Attainment by pupils is on the increase, with 5 A*-C figures at GCSE increasing from eleven per cent to 76 per cent over the last fifteen years. The two largest ethnic groups are white and those of Bangladeshi origin, with many pupils from other ethnic groups represented, notably Caribbean, Somali, Turkish and Chinese.

Morpeth School is a good example of the impact of cultural learning and partnership working on a whole school. The school has embedded a whole-school teaching and learning approach that they have named 'The five R's'¹ (Resilience, Responsibility, Reasoning, Resourcefulness and Reflectiveness).

This ethos provides an impetus for positive change for the whole school community. It prompts rethinking conventional teaching practice, the use made of teaching space and partnership development to generate new opportunities for pupils and staff. 'The five R's' approach is informing the rebuild of the school through the BSF programme.

Project description

The school had already implemented innovative approaches pre-BSF. The entrance of the school functions as a gallery/live arts space and attracts local artists and the wider community, providing a stimulating environment as well as increased access to the school. This creative thinking has been applied to redundant or underused spaces in the school. Over the past fifteen years, the music department has expanded beyond the confines of traditional classrooms. A music recording studio is located in what were once toilets, and boiler rooms have been converted into rehearsal spaces. This inventiveness has not only provided cost effective solutions, but is now informing future use of space through the BSF rebuild.

Key partnerships are helping to shape the future organisation of learning. Morpeth has invested in partnership work with national institutions like the Guildhall School of Music and Drama² and the Barbican³ for the past ten years. These long term partnerships have enabled the school to develop a more inclusive approach to music provision.

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Peter Romhany, Head of Music at Morpeth advises: "When you involve students at a level of excellence, working with professionals not much older than themselves, it not only gives them a positive experience but it also raises their aspiration."

Successful strategies have enabled the music department to appeal to the widest spectrum of pupils. This contributes to a whole school development target to look at ways of helping students become independent learners and develop team skills.

As a result, there is an impressive range of music provision available to students, reflecting cultural tradition and contemporary culture. Over 25 per cent of students are involved in instrumental/vocal tuition and 20 per cent of students take music at Key Stage 4. These participation rates are partly attributed to the long term investment in partnership working. Partners are perceived to be crucial to the schools provision.

Musical Futures

Morpeth's desire to be as inclusive as possible led to an exploration of the work of Musical Futures⁴ four years ago. Morpeth saw this as an opportunity to adopt and formalise new pedagogy and to trial it alongside an existing Year 8 Learning to Learn⁵ project. The set of principles from Learning to Learn were complementary to the Musical Futures approach of bringing non-formal teaching and informal learning approaches into the more formal context of school. Both were peer-led and reflected the musical habits of young learners, providing the opportunity to formalise the process through new assessment methods, under the umbrella of the five R's.

Morpeth successfully applied to become a Musical Futures Champion School from September 2008. It is one of 27 selected Musical Futures Champion Schools, established to enable heads of music to share their good practice. This group of schools also plans and develops further innovative practice through offering free

training, networking and continuing professional development to other teachers in their locality.

Morpeth School is perceived to be a particularly successful Musical Futures Champion School due to their innovation and willingness to explore new ideas, not only by the music staff but by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) as well. Musical Futures is a voluntary initiative which the Head of Music has developed and tailored over a number of years to suit the needs of his pupils. What has emerged is a version of Musical Futures that is vibrant, authentic, and relevant to all young people in the school. It engages and sustains interest among all students, and the impact of Musical Futures is evident through increased motivation, enjoyment and attainment of students passing through the music department. Please refer to www.musicalfutures.org.uk/morpeth+school for more information on this partnership practice

Partnership working

The infrastructure in the Tower Hamlets borough is designed to raise the aspirations of learners and teachers. A local charity, Globetown Learning Community (GLC)⁶ provides community programmes which the school is able to access.

The school is also developing new partnerships with wider post-16 providers, with the intention of aligning existing expertise and resources to provide more strategic and coherent support for students and young adults. Morpeth is a key partner to a new sixth form centre, which will



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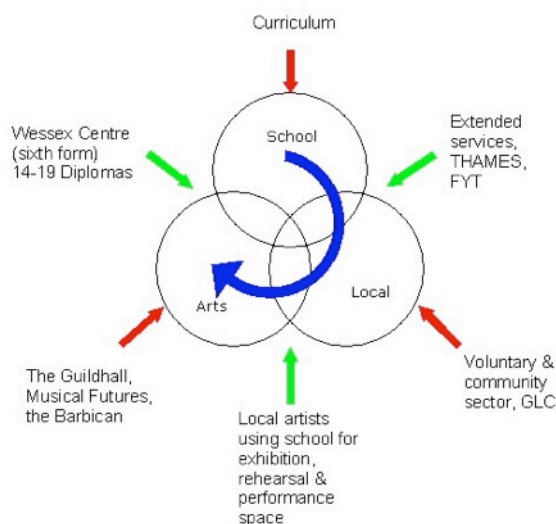
provide a hub of learning for three schools. This partnership links key specialisms, Morpeth's for visual and performing arts, Oaklands School's for science and maths (and soon to be languages) and Swanlea's School for Business, ICT and Enterprise. The Wessex (sixth form) Centre will be the main base for teaching and learning with students using specialist provision and resources at 'satellite' school sites. An academic and diploma programme will be delivered from entry level to Level 3.

Tower Hamlets has a relatively young arts and music service called THAMES (Tower Hamlets Arts and Music Education Service). It provides instrumental tuition, ensemble activities and music support to nearly all Tower Hamlets schools and is part of the borough's children's services provision. The service has a growing national reputation for the way that it develops projects and partnerships in schools with both local and national organisations. Its partnership with the Guildhall Connect⁷ team to deliver whole-class instrumental and vocal teaching (WCIVT) was recently the subject of a commissioned film.

Tower Hamlets is also part of the Find Your Talent⁸ pilot investing in staffing and governance to support a range of new and extended arts and cultural activities for young people in the borough. At a rough

estimate, BSF is likely to enrich Tower Hamlet's cultural infrastructure by approximately £15m of investment in new facilities. Though school based, there is a common commitment to community use of these cultural facilities. Morpeth School has supported THAMES with advocacy, training and networking; as the head of music explains, "we support them to support others". This community approach nurtures primary and transition projects, with a developed local infrastructure providing community support through GLC.

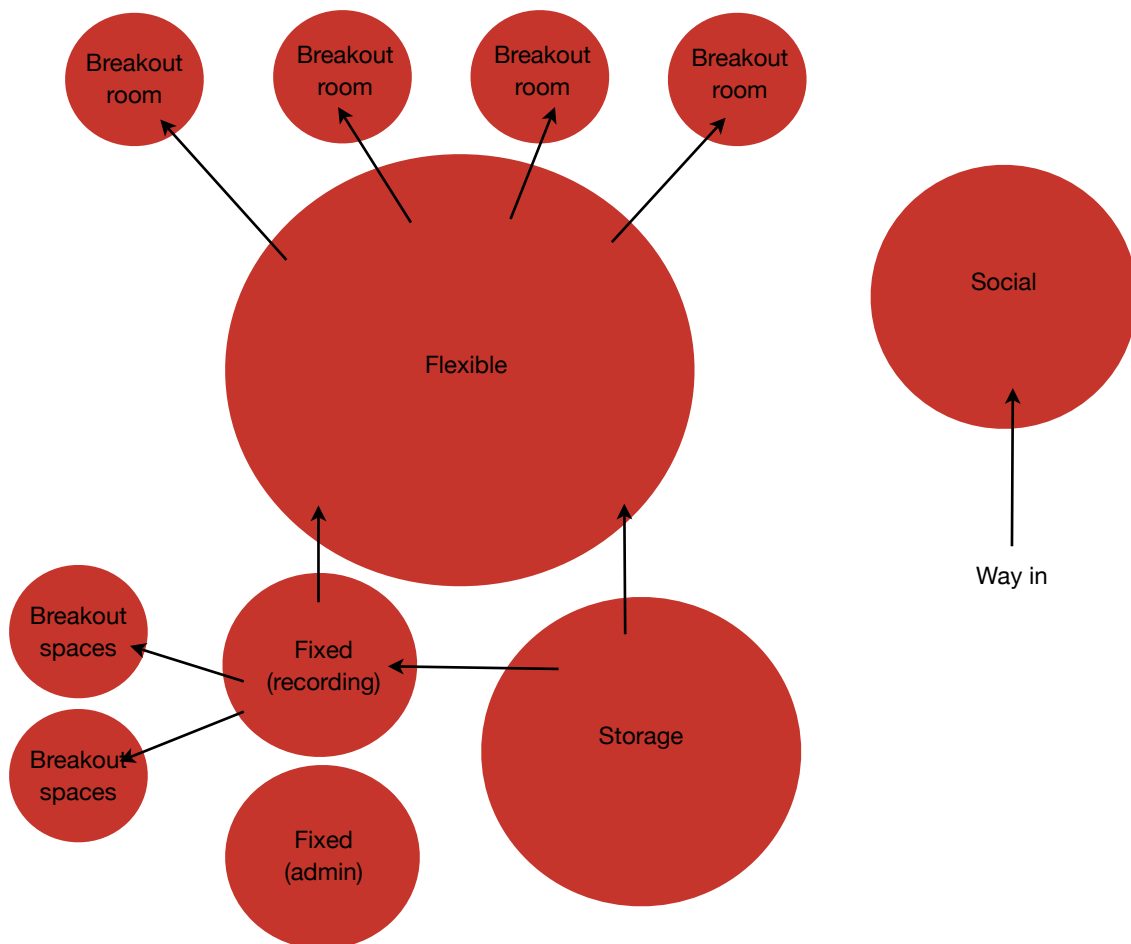
"What the model below describes and aspires to is fundamentally a neighbourhood, cultural hub providing a continuous cycle of learning and improvement that supports educational objectives, promotes growth within the cultural sector (allowing a pathway for young people to achieve their full potential) and promotes a sustainable, local cultural economy and infra-structure. By planning to use BSF in such a way would create new capital resources for the arts – in terms of both learning and enjoyment – and develop a new approach to community use based on fostering a holistic blend of culture, education and community cohesion." explains Ian Sutton, BSF Culture Programme Manager, Sport England & Arts Council England London Region.



This diverse range of partnerships has informed how future music spaces will be configured and used under BSF. Existing music accommodation is to be replaced with a new stand-alone music block. The school has ambitions to create a world-class music learning space with good community access. The vision supports the pedagogy and approach to multiple learning interventions.

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The following represents a conceptual idea of what a music space could look like:



Key lessons learned

- The importance of developing an ethos which supports the foundations of Every Child Matters (ECM) through new ideas and approaches to cultural teaching and learning pedagogy.
- Valuing cultural partnerships as an important component in the learning and in providing access to excellence. It is beneficial to develop long term partnerships beyond project-based experiences, so that partners become part of a wider teaching and learning strategy, providing broader impact on, for example, extended provision and community action.
- Development should be phased in as part of a wider strategy to stimulate and engage the widest possible range of learners. The key motivation for Morpeth’s music development has been the desire to create independent learners.
- BSF programmes provide an ideal opportunity to review the organisation of learning in a school. It is beneficial to have a clear vision supported by partner input and to employ professionals (architects) to help you articulate that vision.

Conditions for success

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- Regular communication between the school and Musical Futures has been critical to the success of the training and CPD programme. Success is dependent on sharing ideas and resources.
- Investment in a change management programme to promote new teaching pedagogy, especially in developing personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS).
- Commitment to the school and wider community to advocate, share knowledge and develop infrastructure.
- Give staff time to play and experiment. Encourage them to take managed risks and feedback to the SLT.
- Use the web to celebrate work to as a wide an audience as possible.

Things to look out for

- The logistics of managing new teaching and learning approaches requires Senior Leadership Team (SLT) buy-in, adequate staffing and access to resources.
- Establishing a shared agenda in consortia working can be challenging and open communication is required.
- Communicating and articulating the school's vision to the BSF teams and professionals requires

Key contacts

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References

1. www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/cfl/learninginschools/121/5rs.asp for more information on the five R's.
2. The Guildhall School of Music & Drama is one of Europe's leading conservatoires, offering musicians, actors, stage managers and theatre technicians an inspiring environment in which to develop as artists and professionals. www.gsmd.ac.uk/
3. The Barbican is Europe's largest multi-arts and conference venue presenting a diverse range of art, music, theatre, dance, film and education events. It is also home to the London Symphony Orchestra <http://www.barbican.org.uk/>
4. Musical Futures is a charitable organisation, which develops distinctive music learning.
5. www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/cfl/learninginschools/121/index.asp for more information on Learning to Learn.
6. www.glcuk.org/