



partnerships for schools

building schools for the future

This case study focuses on partnership working to deliver an Academy, covering the approach taken on education vision, stakeholders involvement, design and value for money.

New Line Learning Academies' Federation was winner of the 'Best Academy delivered in partnership' category in the *Excellence in BSF Awards 2008*.

Key project information

Academies: New Line Learning Academy and The Cornwallis Academy

Project cost: £63m

Local authority: Kent County Council

Academy sponsor: KCC/Cornwallis

Completion date: November 2010

Partnership working to deliver Academies: the New Line Learning Academies' Federation, Kent

Project description

The New Line Learning Academies' Federation project is innovative in a number of ways:

- two complete new build Academies based on a ground-breaking 'learning plaza' design;
- radical changes in school organisation (uniting three previously separate schools);
- the deep use of ICT and business intelligence models to improve learning outcomes;
- emotional intelligence profiling of students and use of demographic data to improve approaches to personalisation and pastoral care;
- approaches to teaching and learning practices based around meta-cognitive pedagogies, and project based and vocational learning;
- strong partnership working both within the school and with the wider community;
- innovative and cost effective approach to procuring school facilities as part of a batched programme of five Academies, through the PfS National Framework.

Partnership working

Excellence in partnership working is at the heart of the NLL project. The Federation itself represents a set of new partnerships to create a distinctive and successful new learning institution for South Maidstone. Other successful partnerships include:

- an innovative 14-19 partnership with other Maidstone schools based around common timetabling, pooled revenue budgets, and an on-site Vocational Skills Centre and National Manufacturing Skills Academy;
- a community initiative with local multi-agency partners including Maidstone Borough Council, Kent Police and local community organisations to reduce anti-social behaviour within the local community;
- a partnership with Yale University to improve emotional intelligence, resilience and risk assessment amongst learners and their families;
- a partnership with learners and their families which enables them to submit real-time feedback about all aspects of their school experience for regular evaluation by the Senior Management Team;

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- an innovative franchising agreement with “Costa Coffee” to provide café facilities for staff and students on both Academy sites; and
- a partnership with KCC and other schools in the area to provide leadership and resources for learners with Visual Impairments in and around the Maidstone area.

Education Vision

The vision for NLL is to develop Academies where all the variables within the learning processes are actively managed to improve the chances of securing better outcomes for every learner. This means that learners and staff will work in an environment that looks and feels like a business/enterprise environment. In this climate, young people will thrive and become secure, confident and skilled.

Students will be engaged in designing their own learning experience and in actively planning their own futures. They will be exposed to highly personalised, innovative, creative, supportive and engaging learning experiences and will acquire the skills needed to contribute positively as responsible citizens to their communities and to cope successfully with a changing future. The Federation will actively promote appropriate emotional behaviours, social skills and competencies to enable students to make positive decisions, which will equip them to adopt healthy and productive lifestyles.

The Academies will facilitate inter-generational family learning and work with multi-agencies to support families at risk. Indeed, the overall culture will be one of reducing the risk of disengagement and disaffection and enhancing students’ resilience to cope with barriers to learning.

NLL will increase the participation of students in all aspects of the Academy and will reduce exclusion by seeking to removing all barriers to learning by identifying risk factors for individuals and sub groups. There will be a consistent approach to teaching and learning in the two academies, yet they will have different specialisms. They will play their part in helping to create a distinctive ethos in each Academy, albeit with common aspects. The design of the two academies is similar and complementary, so that students, parents, teachers and visitors moving between the two academies will feel they are both part of the same family. Each Academy’s design will, however, reflect and reinforce their respective specialisms.

Design issues

The designs of the Academies will provide learning spaces for up to 120 students in 7FE year groups. For

most non-practical subjects such as English, Maths, Humanities, some Science, some Art, Languages and Technology learning will take place in these year-based Learning Plazas, where students will spend up to 70% of their time. This approach has been tested by two fully operational prototypes, built in 2006 and 2008 in the predecessor school buildings.

The designs will create an educational provision that integrates buildings with service delivery, a new ICT infrastructure, a new model of learning, a distributive leadership management structure, and more efficient and effective use of public resources.

The design choices will facilitate an innovative and highly personalised curriculum within a radically redesigned learning environment. This will foster a learning culture that is highly personalised and an environment where students will be able to work independently, create solutions, work in teams and communicate their ideas to a range of audiences. Students will be taught and encouraged to be adaptable and flexible, so the buildings themselves must reflect and nurture these aspirations.



One striking feature of the designs is the idea of Learning Plazas to support different group sizes and learning styles – collaborative, reflective or research-based; have large, small, and individual work-spaces; and have areas where staff can work with small groups, conduct 1:1 consultations, and prepare lessons. The plazas will serve as “home base” for each year group’s 90 or 120 students. Students will be supported by a team of teachers either working with that year cohort or in a particular subject area.

An ‘ante room’ which functions as an entrance hall will be associated with each plaza, and contains lockers and toilets for each year group, as well as the space to remove shoes. Each year group will acquire a sense of ownership and identity for their plaza and associated vestibules (shared by 210 students). The vestibules will ensure that the toilet and locker facilities are self-

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policed by year group peers to deter bullying and promote pastoral care. The intention is that the Learning Plazas, food court and adjoining interaction zones should not look or feel institutional, nor like a traditional school. Instead, eating spaces are envisaged as civilised social spaces where adults and young people can eat and interact together. Staff have no staff room, but are encouraged to plan lessons in flexible areas alongside students.



The building is intended to be unthreatening and should help to project NLL's core values. The idea that the spaces should look and feel like a business environment is an appropriate reflection of the Academy's primary specialism. There is a desire for a consistent and equitable education provision across both Academies and there will be as much similarity in the design of the two Academies as possible. The design expresses the flexible Learning Plazas as large-volume teaching blocks, and the building form is generated by designing from the inside of the Learning Plazas outwards. The Learning Plazas have been designed as double-height spaces to promote natural lighting and ventilation, and accommodate a more intimate teaching environment in mezzanine areas. Multi-disciplinary collaboration during the design process has ensured maximum integration of lighting (including modo settings), ICT, furniture and acoustics.

The dining facilities within the Food Court will ensure a much more relaxed and enjoyable break time experience for students and staff, which in turn will impact positively on learning. This space will also host pre-school breakfast clubs and after-school lessons. Avoiding separation between pupils and staff promotes passive supervision and stifles opportunities for misbehaviour, including bullying.

Stakeholder Engagement

A range of stakeholder engagement channels were used to develop the Federation projects, these included the development of a "New Line Learning" website, 4,000 copies of a project consultation document were prepared and distributed in the area. Regular community engagement sessions were held, as were regular Parent engagement sessions.

Extended services

The NLL program links to a community-wide model working with primary schools and providing a consistent framework of expectations and interventions for challenging pupils. In addition, the NLL Academies' Federation will offer:

- on-site breakfast and after-school clubs;
- 8 am – 8 pm all year round child care facilities
- discrete spaces for multi-agency activities, based on NLL's innovative emotional intelligence and demographic profiling of learner's and learner's families wider needs;
- a range of study support activities, including targeted support programmes, home-work clubs, and project clubs
- on-site Police Liaison facilities at New Line Learning Academy;
- parenting support;
- support for young and single teenage parents in the community (a particular local need);
- a wide offer of well established third party community uses, including local church, sports, scout and other clubs;
- parental and community access to ICT facilities, including the provision of a mobile access device for every learner, which can be brought home, everyday, for family use; and
- referral to specialist support services, based on NLL's innovative emotional intelligence and demographic profiling of learner's and learner's family's wider needs.

Value for Money

The NLL Academies' Federation project represents excellent value for money. They were developed from Expression of Interest (Eoi) to Preferred Bidder in 18 months. They are on target to be delivered within their Funding Allocation Model allocations and are on programme to complete construction by November 2010.

The innovative education strategy/design reduces circulation space to just 17% of the gross floor area, thereby providing considerably more learning space per pound than could be achieved by following the conventional BB98 template.

In addition, the Federation is the first in an innovative Batched Programme of Academy Projects with a total capital value in excess of £120m. This batching has saved the local authority, National Framework contractors and Academies Trusts significant time and money in repeat procurement costs.

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Key contacts

Please copy any email communications to both contacts listed below:

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Further information

More information about the New Line Learning Academy and the Cornwallis Academy can be found at:

www.newlinelearning.com

Further details about Kent County Council's BSF and Academies programmes are available at:

www.kent.gov.uk/bsf