



partnerships for schools

building schools for the future

This case study looks at Tameside's student engagement strategy with a specialist performing arts and sports high school. It explains the range of events employed at different stages of the BSF process to ensure student opinion was sought, heard and acted upon.

This project was winner of the 'Innovation in student engagement' school prize in the *Excellence in BSF Awards 2008*.

Key project information

School: Mossley Hollins High School

Specialism: Performing arts and sports

Local authority: Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

BSF project: 13 schools in Wave 3, with a further seven allocated to a later wave

Project type: The £183m BSF project includes new and remodelled schools, academies, and co-location of SEN and mainstream schools

Tameside's student engagement strategy in action: Mossley Hollins High School

Project description

Mossley Hollins High School Specialist in Performing Arts and Sport is a 750-place new build sample scheme that will be financed through PFI funding. The new building and facilities will be located on the edge of the Pennine hills within the grounds of the existing school. The location of the new school represents a challenge due to the topography of the site. This has resulted in a five-storey design that not only has the "wow" factor but provides an inspirational learning environment with flexibility for the future.

The contrast between the existing buildings which, although well cared for, are in poor condition and have significant access problems, and the proposed new facilities could not be starker.

Project aims

Student engagement in Tameside is central to delivery and success of the BSF project. The BSF team is committed to developing and testing ideas with stakeholders – and particularly with students - before implementing any solutions. The team ensures it listens to, and values, all contributions.

Mossley Hollins students have had consistent involvement with BSF from an early stage. Their views informed the development of Tameside's overall education vision, and their contribution to the development of their own school will result in inspirational facilities.

Through working closely with students, the project team has not only captured their ideas, but hopes to inspire them and the community for generations to come.

Tameside's student engagement strategy

Highlights of the engagement strategy

The following table shows some of the events used and the stage of the BSF process when the event was held.

Engagement type	Stage in the process	No of students	Aims and objectives
Visioning Conferences	Pre Strategic Business Case, 2005	450	To embed student voice in the Education Vision
BSF Vision Launch Event	Pre – Strategic Business Case, November 2005	30	To publicly launch the vision with student involvement
School Vision Development	SBC /OBC 2005 – 2007	690	To develop schools visions with student voice embedded
Design Conferences	OBC and design brief development, July 2006	320	To inform the key education design drivers in Tameside
School Visits	Whole project – to date	42	Development of expert clients
Borough Wide Student Voice Bidder Liaison	OBC and procurement development, June 2006 – to date	57	To provide opportunities for bidders to engage directly with students
Guest speakers at BSEC	Procurement February 2007	2	To inspire the market to take student voice seriously
Bidders Day	Procurement, March 2007	35	To make students' aspirations clear to bidders
DQI Workshops	Procurement, May 2007	12	To agree design priorities
Design Engagements	Procurement, June 2007 ongoing	8	To ensure student voice is listened to at all stages
ICT Workshops	Preferred Bidder – to date		To road test latest technology
Transition Events	Stage 0 planning, July 2008 – ongoing	100	To ensure student's concerns are taken into account to plan for re-organisation
Transition and Curriculum Planning	Stage 0 planning January 2008 – ongoing	240	To develop innovative curriculum models with a premiership football club.
Celebration Features	October 2008 – ongoing	14000	To deliver a project that will celebrate the opening of the new and remodelled schools.
Ambassadors to later schools	October 2008 - onwards	30	To share experience of the engagement process

Across all student engagement activity in Tameside the BSF team has promoted transformation and innovation. Students have:

- Created, planned participated and in some cases delivered the activities and engagements in individual schools and borough wide events/meetings;
- Engaged with the private sector partners in construction, design, facilities management and ICT,

highlighting how important it is to involve students in the design process;

- Presented to bidding consortia and prepared displays for discussion of their work and thoughts for the future of learning in their school during the procurement phase. Exhibits included musical demonstrations by pupils at Mossley Hollins;
- Supported students from other schools that need additional help in the activities, for example students at Astley Sports College each buddied with students

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from Cromwell High School (SPLD) at our design conference to ensure their voices were heard;

- Continued their BSF participation from primary to secondary school. (There is one individual who is now a member of our borough wide group);
- Manchester City Football Club has employed a dedicated project worker to support Tameside's BSF and change management programme three days a week for the next 12 months with particular emphasis on curriculum and student transition;
- Interviewed Ruth Kelly live on stage when she was Minister for Education about her aspirations for BSF;
- Presented directly to bidders at the initial open day; they have been at every engagement session with the three shortlisted bidders and have attended presentations delivered by bidders;
- Supported the Council's successful Beacon bid by attending an exhibition of examples of community engagement.

Student ideas

At Mossley Hollins High School the following areas have been designed into the learning and design solutions as a result of student feedback:

Toilets – Students said they didn't feel safe using toilets that are in the centre of a row of traditional cubicles. Instead they queued to use toilets that are at either end. Toilets will include wash basins, with entry directly from the landing and students are happy with this solution.

Teaching pods – One student said: "We asked the architects to redesign the teaching pods to get rid of narrow corridors and spaces you have to walk through to get to other spaces and we really like this because we don't like being disrupted during our lessons."

Sustainability – Year 7 & 9 students have designed the Geography space with architects as well as delivering a project 'Sustainable Building Designs.

Dining area – Students said they didn't want the dining/social space to look like a canteen outside lunch hours. One student said: 'It now opens up to external space and is elevated in to the heart of the school. We have also looked at how we can reduce queuing time for school lunches so we can have as much social and extra learning time as possible.'

Specialist facilities – Students said they were particularly looking forward to getting a fitness suite, something which had been much desired by the students. One student added: 'There is also a drama studio which is much better than our current one because we have been able to help plan the design and the architects have listened to us. These can also be used by us before and after school.'

Flexible spaces – The school will incorporate flexible spaces where ICT can always be accessed. Plasma screens throughout the school will support learning and encourage the sharing of information. Social and personal spaces have been carefully considered, both inside and outside the building

Students are unanimous in expressing their hope that the new school will lead to the following:

- Creating greater respect for each other and their learning environment;
- Developing stronger staff/student relationships;
- Improving each individual's learning experience at Mossley Hollins;
- Supporting their behaviour policy, **NUHOPE** – No answering back, Uniform, Homework, On Task, Punctual, Equipment.

Staff and student feedback

The tone of feedback from staff, students, and parents has been positive. However, involvement throughout the process means that their optimism is injected with a note of realism about some of the challenges ahead and a sense that by continuing to work together these can, and will, be overcome.

Student/staff comments – September 2008

"Even though we won't be learning in the new school, I'm proud to have been involved and represent 750 other students at Mossley Hollins. I'm coming back to see the teaching and learning and new building at work." **Student aged 15**

"It will be hard for pupils and staff to change to the new buildings but together between the LEP and us in the school we'll do it – we'll make it a success" **Student aged 15**

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"I've had several opportunities to represent students at Mossley Hollins and Tameside for example at the Beacon Awards day and LEP Bidders day where we tasted food we can expect in school and tried furniture and ICT equipment. It was both interesting and rewarding and provided us with ideas and inspiration as to what could be integrated in to our new school design" **Student aged 15**

"It was essential we involved our young people as they're our future generation and at the forefront of modern 21st Century education" **Member of school staff (non-teaching)**

"The process has allowed students to be involved in the planning of our new school and its functions. This in turn has allowed them to be more confident and responsible citizens" **Member of teaching staff**

Parents Comments – June 2008

"My son is extremely happy and has progressed well at Mossley Hollins. He finds his work fun but challenging, and staff supportive. The headteacher and his staff are doing an excellent job. I wish I could go too."

"I have never encountered a school that considers everyone's opinions as well as Mossley Hollins."

Key contact

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Further information

Information about all aspects of Tameside's BSF project can be found at: www.tameside.gov.uk/bsf/