

# SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

September 2010

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Langley Academy, Slough

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our new bi-monthly newsletter and what a hectic few months it has been recently in the schools market.

Prior to the General Election there were some monster BSF programmes, from the £2.6 billion Hammersmith & Fulham Scheme, through to a range of smaller ones such as Enfield, with others then becoming Academies, including Bournemouth and Poole. At the same time we had a raft of Academy projects being released from the second National Academies Framework, alongside the usual Local Authority and school sponsored projects.

Whilst all of this work was going on, everyone had one eye on the future political landscape. The Academies programme looks safe with all party support, but what are Free Schools? And would existing BSF schemes be cancelled, or just slowed down?

Rumours began to circulate about Free Schools, but without any substance to back them up and the Academies Bill was rushed through parliament to ensure

that schools who wanted to were able to convert in time for the new academic year. 32 schools have made the change in time for the new term, with a further 110 due to become Academies in the near future.

On Monday the 5th July, barely six weeks after the Coalition Government was formed, Michael Gove sent shockwaves through the industry by announcing that all BSF and Academies projects were on hold.

We now find ourselves operating in an entirely new landscape, where funding is uncertain, planning constraints are changing, Building Bulletins are likely to be scrapped and the future role of Local Authorities is uncertain.

The language of education has changed – no longer are we talking about Local Education Partnerships, Strategic Partnering Agreements or personalised learning. Instead we are talking about New Academies, Free Schools, empowering schools and parent groups and the removal of ‘top down targets’.

But what does this really mean? The press would have you believe that your local village halls, empty shops and

disused factories will be flooded with Free Schools. The schools will run by a variety of groups from existing academy sponsors to religious groups, enthusiastic parents to vast commercial enterprises, desperate to wring every last penny out of the Government. The reality is that at the time of writing this, no-one really knows.

One thing, however, is certain. The education landscape has changed. Funding will have to come from new, innovative arrangements and schools will need to become more efficient in their use of space. For example, a school hall is empty for over two-thirds of the school day? Don’t build two new classrooms, why not refurbish the hall and increase its utilisation instead? As these expensive assets are made to work harder, the knock-on may be that the traditional school day changes. Pupils may attend in shifts, with the first cohort starting and ending earlier, with the second shift of students coming in for the afternoon and ending in the evening.

Is this the stuff that an overactive imagination is made of, or a vision of the future? Only time will tell.

## PROJECT FOCUS

In the current economic climate schools are increasingly looking at how they can make greater use of existing space. Our aim is to provide support to schools, primary or secondary, new build or remodelled, looking at how to evolve the physical environment in response to creating a more personalised approach to learning.

Our understanding of learning is changing. Throughout the history of compulsory education, society has aimed to create systems that would enable all children and young people to be successful, achieve their potential and become active citizens, within safe and secure environments.

In the past this was largely undertaken with little recognition of individuality, personal needs or aspiration and was largely predicated on a 'one size fits all' model. We are able to support schools looking at evolving the physical environment in response to personalised learning. Working with a wide variety of pilot schools, we are looking at a series of physical interventions, both small and large scale which can be implemented to support personalised learning in a variety of practical forms, ensuring the most effective use of space, time and resources.

## SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS

13-14 September 2010  
- BSEC/ Remodelling  
Education Spaces:  
University Place,  
University of Manchester

The new Government has introduced significant budgets cuts which affect new build plans for Britain's educational buildings. This two-day event organised by BSEC will focus on the refurbishment, remodelling and redesign of existing education buildings. Speakers include Darren Talbot of Davis Langdon, Ben Smith of Aecom, Michael Olliff of Scott Brownrigg, Marcus Orlovsky of Bryanston Square, Baroness Andrews, OBE, Paul Lincoln of Edison Learning and Marcel Hendrik of Apollo Education.

### Academies Bill

The Academies Bill allows existing schools to 'opt out' of Local Authority control, receive direct funding from Central Government and the freedom to develop their own curriculum without OFSTED inspection. The bill provides for 'Free Schools' (referred to in the legislation as 'additional schools'), who will be legislatively governed in the same way as academies.

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### 3Rs

A joint Davis Langdon, Scott Brownrigg and BCSE report has recently been published which looks afresh at school buildings, concentrating on Refresh, Refurbish and Reusing existing facilities where possible. It also looks at the cost implications of the 3Rs when compared to new build. The booklet can be downloaded at:

<http://www.thecentreforschooldesign.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/TheNew3Rs-1.pdf>

## HINTS AND TIPS

### Funding

With the current scarcity of cash, new and increasingly innovative ways of funding capital projects are required. We have teamed up with a number of developers and funders on a global basis to develop innovative new funding models. If you would like to know more, please contact Darren Talbot on 07702 762 537 or [darren.talbot@davislangdon.com](mailto:darren.talbot@davislangdon.com).

### Making existing buildings work harder

Davis Langdon and DEGW have carried out a number of recent projects that have increased the utilisation of otherwise under-used space. West Hill Primary school, our project focus in this newsletter is an excellent example, where we created new teaching space in the existing hall, removing the need for a three-classroom extension and the associated impact on education that the building works would have entailed, at a cost of under £200,000.



West Hill Primary School, Wandsworth

## DAVIS LANGDON AND AECOM

As you may well have heard, Davis Langdon and AECOM are joining forces and when the transaction is concluded, tentatively in early October, Davis Langdon will become a global business line of AECOM. What this means is that you will still have the same contacts in Davis Langdon, but they will be supported by their colleagues in AECOM, providing faster, better and cost effective services, focused as always on delivering the maximum value for money from your project.

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