department for education and skills
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innovation

Specialist Schools and Academies Trust
EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY

NEXT PRACTICE in
Resourcing Aspects of Personalisation

The Learning Environment

COLLECTED SYNOPSES

“Good learning environments make learning effective by ensuring that … basic elements of well-being are taken care of, ensuring that a child can focus his or her entire effort on the core tasks they are being asked to perform. The best designed learning spaces will go beyond covering the basic minimum and will use the learning environment to actively increase students' achievement during the school day.”

Hannah Green et.al, *Personalisation and Digital Technologies*, 2005.

“At the heart of personalisation is the understanding that learning environments comprise the totality of factors with which the learners interact, including people, spaces and resources … Personalised learning environments should be sufficiently flexible to enable learners to interact with resources when it is most appropriate for them.”

Shelagh Wright, et. al., ‘Designing Learner Environments: The virtual and the real - can technology help students shape their learning environment?’, in *Personalisation and Digital Technologies*, 2005.

Introduction

The Next Practice project, *Resourcing Aspects of Personalisation,* investigates how schools might marshal and deploy their resources more effectively to support an educational provision that meets the needs of all learners. This event looks specifically at how we construct environments for learning that offer the support students need to realise their personal learning ambitions.

Next Practice projects seek solutions to pressing systemic problems through fostering and supporting radical innovation in current practice. Reflecting on the experience of practitioners working in this area, our aim is to create a launching pad at these events for thinking about what might be Next Practice.

In preparation for this event, we asked practitioners to send us a written synopsis of work they are currently doing in the areas of personalisation and the learning environment. These are presented, in alphabetical order of institution name, in the following pages and we hope you find them interesting. Together they provide a sketch of the landscape of current practice, illustrating the directions in which we are moving today. Hopefully, they will stimulate your thinking about what might be possible, desirable and important as a next step in educational practice.

Messages from the edge of current practice

Key messages resonate through these synopses, and through recent research and thinking in this area. Striving to meet the challenge of personalising learning is leading to a profound reconsideration of how schools are designed. The DfES' Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme demonstrates significant commitment to rethinking schools in this country, so that we may become much more relevant and responsive to the needs of individuals and communities. This along with other initiatives such as joinedupdesign-forschools, are informed by an intention to involve students in school design and put their needs at the centre of the design process. Schools are indeed beginning to change. Our learning environments (which might include media studios, farms, businesses or wherever students can plug in a laptop) are becoming increasingly varied, so much so that the concepts of 'school' and 'classroom' often seem outmoded.

When we talk about redesigning schools, however, we are not just talking about buildings, but the many spaces in which children and young people learn. As the following synopses illustrate, good educational leaders and practitioners think beyond the physicality of school when they think about the kind of learning environment they want to construct. Many are attentive to a student's life beyond the classroom and the range of factors that might inhibit or enable effective learning. Providing Extended School facilities or building better bridges between schools and other agencies, for example, provides students with the support they need. Thinking about the learning environment, in this instance, means thinking about the best way of helping students to arrive at an emotional place where they are able to learn.

Current practice utilises people, buildings, technology, time and other resources in host of innovative ways to construct learning environments. It strives to put the needs of learners at the heart of this process of construction, and to become more flexible in what can be offered so that learners are afforded a greater level of choice about where, how and with whom they learn. But what more might we do and what might we do differently as we re-imagine our learning environments? Are our recent innovations "evolutionary rather than revolutionary"[1]? What would a revolutionary step forward, from best practice to Next Practice look like?

[1]Hannah Green, Keri Facer and Tim Rudd with Patrick Dillon and Peter Humphreys, *Personalisation and Digital Technologies*, DEMOS and NESTA Futurelab, 2005, p. 26.

A QUIET PLACE
Penny Moon, Founder

Recommended nationally in the United Kingdom for good practice, A Quiet Place is a holistic integrated service that supports children, families and staff within the mainstream education system. Based on the latest brain research, the protocol offers an effective and efficient service based on targeted outcomes within the spectrum of Emotional Intelligence. The protocol is based on the Educational Therapeutic model and is a positive and empowering model that 'works' effectively and also fits into the context of education. It offers a range of interpersonal skills that enable rapid behavioural change including increased self awareness and self esteem, development of empathy and resilience leading to improved relationships and successful communications. Guided visualisation and story, massage, creative arts, yoga and meditation are woven into the programme to enable and empower change and choice within the individual.

BETTRIDGE SCHOOL
Mary Saunders, Headteacher

This special school for children with severe and profound learning disabilities works within a challenging environment in terms of physical space to deliver the whole curriculum to our diverse group of pupils. Although pupils are organised in classes most of their learning is planned individually making use of specialist spaces in school as well as individual work stations in classrooms. Of particular value in this respect is our sensory garden and sensory room where children often take the lead in exploration using techniques such as Intensive Interaction. A key issue for many of our pupils is their difficulty in generalising learning from one context to another and this has led to a planned use of community settings as part of the curriculum on a regular basis for all pupils. This concept extends to learning at home. Collaborative working with families to establish priorities and consistent approaches recognises that learning does not have physical boundaries. Those with profound disabilities can often teach us as much as we teach them. It is clear that the environment in which we place our children can have a very profound effect upon their readiness to learn. The ethos of the school is that we articulate the value that we place on the uniqueness of each child in everything that we do. This extends to the quality of the environment that we offer and we will seek to make this even more explicit in our new building as we move from concept to design over the next few months.

BOGNOR REGIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Julia Vincent, Deputy Headteacher

Our secondary school has created an Alternative Curriculum Experience (ACE) for some pupils who find some aspects of the usual mainstream diet challenging. ACE operates differently across the key stages, but addresses both literacy and numeracy issues, as well as inputs on boundaries, anger management and specific issues such as substance abuse and bullying. The environments within school are child friendly, calm and make best use of new technologies where appropriate. Change is effected through a variety of tools i.e. arts and technology project, a dance course, a film making project as well as off-site outdoor and adventurous education. A sizeable part of the Key Stage 4 provision is access to Vocational courses. This is provided in partnership with our local FE provider and other secondary schools. Pupils in the area travel either to the FE provider or to a purpose built Vocational Learning Centre on our site on one day per week. Partnership protocols are in place and FE lecturers work from the VLC on our site five days per week. The outcome has been 96% retention post-16 into continuing education or employment, where we aim to track and stay in contact with the pupils for the first term to ensure that they settle onto the level 2/3 course. We are currently discussing another learning environment off-site for pupils who need extra support as an alternative to permanent exclusion. Our behaviour AST is helping to shape this provision with colleagues from the Local Authority.

BRIGHOUSE SCHOOL
Graham Soles, Headteacher

Personalisation at Brighouse High School allows youngsters a learning environment that balances entitlement, variety of location and personal relevance. Key Stage 4 pupils (14-16 year olds) are offered one or more of five curriculum routes, each including a different element of choice. About half the cohort will take route 3 which involves purely GCSEs. Other pupils take vocational routes involving Business, Design and ICT. Pupils are guided onto these routes based on their Cognitive Abilities Test, previous assessment, progress at Key Stage 3, recommendations by staff and academic/vocational choice. All five routes are colour-coded and youngsters in many lessons work alongside their contemporaries who are on other routes. The school has been particularly praised for its work with pupils who are deemed at risk of exclusion and at Brighouse they are likely to be offered the school's route 5 option, which includes the core subjects supplemented by vocational and life skills courses with qualifications. Last year's route 5 cohort at Year 10 included many youngsters who were in danger of being excluded because of behavioural problems. The pupils took their Maths and English GCSEs partly in school and partly at a local youth centre. They then were entered for their exams early and they all passed. These youngsters are also part of the Asdan Youth Award scheme and Youth Train. They also do extended work experience and units of NVQ (National Vocational Qualifications) in hair dressing, construction and catering at college. They do not tend to have good interpersonal skills so they attend outward bound courses and confidence building activities to build up their skills, their team work and their potential. The success of the programme is a result of the personalisation of the learning environment provided.

BROCKHILL PARK PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE
Tony Lyng, Headteacher

At Brockhill Park we have developed an approach to Citizenship and Enterprise education through a global food project. All Year 8 and 9 students undertake project based learning activities which culminate in the mass production of vegetables and flowers which are sold to provide charitable support for third world needs. In addition to large scale cultivation on the school grounds students' work in partnership with the Boston, Massachusetts, USA Farm project through videoconferencing, e-mail and visits. The students are highly motivated by this project which draws out strong elements of student voice, authentic assessment and e-learning. It is an exciting way of developing L2L, enterprise skills, problem solving ability and is grounded in developing global citizenship. It is team taught/facilitated by citizenship, science and business and health teachers. The work is now being extended out to primary schools that are developing similar or related projects. The learning environment is multi-faceted including the school grounds, IT suites, and the e-supported environment available through the whole range of electronic devices. The project is also proving to be a pilot leader for other aspects of the curriculum who see merit in this way of working.

CAROLINE CHISHOLM SCHOOL
Tony Downing, Headteacher

Caroline Chisholm School (CCS) is an all through 4-18 school. We currently have 800 students and eventually we will have 1700 – all in the same place. CCS is one of a growing number of schools which are challenging the traditional split between primary and secondary schools. Children who join in reception class have a place here through to Year 13. At Year 7 they join a larger cohort that comes to us through the conventional primary-secondary transition. The marriage between primary and secondary is not complete: about one third of all staff has experienced cross-phase teaching and in the process we have discovered many differences in perception as well as much common ground. The benefits we have so far identified are:

- Year 6 have gained in confidence because they perceive a much less noticeable gulf between primary and secondary.

- The presence of younger children has helped Year 7 to Year 10 students to reflect on and moderate behaviour. There have been no incidents of cross-phase bullying and many examples of older children helping younger ones.
- We have already found many curriculum gains: primary is an ideal setting, for instance, for our GCSE Health and Social Care group to learn about real situations; our primary students have leapt at the chance to use a full-size sports hall, get on the big stage, use the Food Technology room, practise in the Music rooms.
- Parents' relationship with school has improved – bringing elements of primary phase's approach with parents into the secondary phase.
- Staff have gained enormously in learning about each other's phases but the differences in perception have often been wider than we had supposed. We have a golden opportunity to address the dip in performance which traditionally accompanies the move from primary to secondary.

This setting works for us but it is only a solution in the right circumstances. Primary and secondary colleagues need to agree common values and aims. Ours is a new community and the coherence of an all-through school is powerful in bringing families together. Extending school services becomes much clearer in an all-through setting. Our long-term success, though, depends on convincing everyone that we all gain from this and, especially, convincing the parents of young children that teenagers can be trusted

CROSSHALL JUNIOR SCHOOL
Julia Elliot, Headteacher

Our junior school is using ICT and digital media to enable children to develop a greater depth of learning. The project began by staff identifying opportunities where ICT could improve the quality of learning. Rather than the teacher leading the lessons, the children are using a range of software to explore new ideas. For example, in music, two pieces of software are used. Notation software enables children to compose and refine their music through objective listening. Compositional software provides the opportunity for collaborative work where children of all levels of musical ability experienced success. In RE, Year 4 children worked in small groups to retell stories by filming animations. The discussion, negotiation and rehearsal process experienced by the learners, led to a greater depth of understanding of a subject many children previously had not enjoyed. In literacy, rather than writing a piece of persuasive writing, children made movies to communicate their ideas to their peers. In Year 5 the Shakespearean module was supported by making animation films. The quality of the resulting discussion, which formed part of the assessment process, far exceeded our expectations of depth of understanding. In geography, when offered the choice of learning style, Year 6 children presented their developing country project in the style of a documentary, watched by their peers. Evidence, to date, points to a definite improvement in the children's engagement with the learning process. By having access to high quality ICT resources, children from Years 3 to 6 have experienced a greater depth of learning. They have learnt to generate and manipulate sights and sounds to create their own audiovisual work. As their finished products receive a greater audience, not only throughout the whole school, but also globally via the school website, our children take an immense pride in their work.

DARLINGTON EDUCATION VILLAGE
Dela Smith, Chief Executive

The newly-federated Darlington Education Village (opened in April 2006) comprises a secondary, a primary and an all-age special school, and combines the technical expertise of Beaumont Hill Technology College and the performing arts reputation of Haughton's Arts College. It operates as a single school and is overseen by a single governing body. It caters for children of six months to nineteen years of age and delivers a range of a Children's Services. This wide range of age and ability requires an equally wide range of facilities to cater to the needs of Darlington's pupils, including top class sports facilities and a hydrotherapy pool, dance and drama studios and a large performance hall, which opens out onto the village green area to allow for indoor and outdoor performances. In keeping with the school's ethos of adapting itself to its pupils' needs rather than the other way around, there are also outdoor classrooms, with features that support the environment. The Village uses

interactive whiteboards and there is wireless internet access in every teaching space. Students can learn in a fully-equipped television studio, along with a virtual reality room, which is an invaluable teaching tool, for helping students to visualise complex subject matter, such as the inner workings of the body. To support a comprehensive vocational programme, Design and Technology classrooms are fitted with industry-standard equipment. For students to learn at their own pace, Darlington provides space for independent and supported learning and a large Learning Resource Centre and library.

GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Richard Gerver, Headteacher

Our approach changed four years ago as the key strategy in turning around a school which was struggling to provide a meaningful educational journey for our children. We developed an approach which put the child at the centre of the process, a process that had to be contextual and rich in experience. Our process works through a cycle of; learning to learn and live, the development of competencies and skills, contextual approaches leading to the development of aspirations and values. Our approach is based on the challenge of preparing our learners for the 21st Century. The core of our process is a fully-functioning town that the children are trained to run themselves. The town includes; a radio station, TV studio, museum, a café and shops. The children learn the skills needed to run the town on Fridays when the school 'shuts' and our University opens. Children are trained by staff and experts from the areas run in the town. We are now preparing to revolutionise our curriculum further based on the learning and development so far. We have developed a thematic curriculum that runs under four strands; Communication, Enterprise, Culture and Wellbeing. Our University is being expanded and every Friday, will offer children the choice of up to thirty different six-week courses to sign up to and attend at the end of which they will receive accreditation and then move on to the next choice. Workshops are diverse and range from Money Management to Beauty Therapy, Tennis to Furniture Making. The effect of the development has been dramatic. Within a year of the process starting the school had become a vibrant, energetic and self-confident learning community.

HORNSEA SCHOOL AND LANGUAGE COLLEGE
Ron Newey, Headteacher

Hornsea School and Language College is using a range of strategies to personalise learning. Our recent – and planned – innovations to timetabling are designed to bring greater levels of flexibility and choice to the students' learning pathways. For example, we intend to move towards a two year Key Stage 3 by September 2007; MFL has been introduced in all our feeder primary schools; we offer Expressive Arts GCSE for all Year 9 pupils; GCSE RE has been introduced in year 9 for completion in Year 10; we have a 'total' immersion' language groups in Years 7 and 3 resulting in early entry to GCSE; and GCSE ICT and Humanities will be introduced for all Year 9 pupils in September 2006/07. Hornsea offers its students a range of vocational courses and identifies groups to enter an alternative curriculum. At Key Stage 4 we offer an integrated approach to Vocational and Academic GCSEs; GCSEs and Vocational and College course and GCSEs; and a Trial Exam Results day tied into the Sixth Form Review Day. Older students are also given the opportunity to set their own learning goals, via individualised learning plans. In order to ensure that we are changing towards the needs of students rather than our own agenda, we run regular on-line questionnaires, which also assess specific subject areas for Quality Assurance purposes. We believe that students cannot learn in a disordered or unsafe environment, so citizenship short courses are offered to all our students. ICT and a trend towards using wireless laptops rather than PCs give our students access to 'anytime, anywhere' e-learning and allow them to learn at their own pace.

HUGH CHRISTIE TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE
Mark Fenn, Vice Principal

To promote personalisation and ensure students have control over their learning, within a two year Key Stage 3 programme, Hugh Christie Technology College has implemented a branded competency based curriculum called HESAS. 'Humanities and English Skills Across Subjects' is a modular based curriculum relating to their social backgrounds and modern day culture. A

choice of modules, such as 'The Simpsons', is available for all Key Stage 3 students enabling them either to gain a broad understanding of all humanities areas or specialise. All modules lend themselves to a concept of 'self determined earned autonomy', realising the students' own ability to work independently and to deadlines. Classes are grouped either in 30's, 45's or 60's to enable team teaching and to address the needs of gender and learning style. With all students having access to their own tablet PC, the power of learning is firmly in the control of the individual. The school is now in the process of developing this curriculum to include the core subjects. In addition, a four period day will enable students also to dictate the timings of the day (i.e. when they have breaks and when they change learning focus). Feedback from students has been very positive as they feel in control of their learning and are able to learn in a way that suits them. Results in the humanities subjects have also improved and the importance of literacy has been enhanced.

LEIGH CITY TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE
Frank Green, Principal and Chief Executive

The Leigh City Technology College is creating a Quality Learning Network that achieves excellence in all its services, in an enterprising culture and in partnership with the community. It is developing its style of education which is enabling our students not only to maximise their academic achievement but also to develop those softer skills of teamwork, initiative, judgement and compassion that are so important in a successful society. The key features of the Leigh 'brand' of education which is helping to develop a personalised learning culture for the twentieth century is as follows:

- Modular culture: six equal units of learning a year, six assessments, six reports
- No bells
- Management Information Pack (MIP), six reports a year on Key Performance Indicators published to staff and governors
- Vertical Tutor groups across whole College
- Strong Student Council
- Additional mentoring for vulnerable students
- Vertical Curriculum: 2 year Key Stage 3, 2/3year Key Stage 4, 2/3year Key Stage 5, moving towards 'Stage not Age' related learning
- Longer learning sessions (currently 4 x 80mins per day)
- Vocational programmes as entitlement for all in Key Stage 4
- International Baccalaureate: Diploma for post 16 and Middle Years Programme for KS3 and 4
- Formalise Emotional Intelligence programme for all students, staff and parents
- Industrial links in all areas of Learning
- Leadership capacity: All senior staff are involved in working with other schools and organisations

As part of the conversion to Academy status, the College is being completely re-built on a single site. The key features of this design are:

- Breaking The Leigh into four small Colleges within the Academy, each with its own Principal and team of staff
- Each College will have its unique area with the specialist areas servicing each College and our local families of schools
- Teaching areas will be substantial double-size spaces for two teachers and 60 children with learning sessions being planned for two, three hour blocks during the day
- It is envisaged that the pairs of teachers will be from different disciplines and it will be up to them to divide the time as they see fit. Each pair will normally have their group of 60 children for two learning sessions per week.
- We will need to create a new governance framework for the Academy in terms of relationships with each College
- We will need to decide the level of autonomy between Principals and Chief Executive
- We will need to decide how time is used once we are settled into the new environment: variable days, 24/7, continuous learning?

LILIAN BAYLIS TECHNICAL SCHOOL
Phyllis Gregory, Advanced Skills Teacher

As AST at Lilian Baylis I have been moving teaching and learning into a more integrated, cross-curricular environment in which where project work, involving the use of media technologies, has been a means to developing students' skills and competencies. My students are asked to move from being passive consumers to active producers of their education; they 'drive' the technology, creating filmic productions that teach other students about subject content and jointly evaluate the work and working process. I had used video production as a key teaching and learning strategy for many years but, with the development of digital technology, I started to examine the competencies and mental strategies that using this powerful tool entailed, at both an individual and group level. It become clear that digital technologies and student access to them – as well as fusing the practicalities of digital production with learning subject content – could pose an interesting challenge for both teacher and student. I have developed several projects at Lilian Baylis to test the hypothesis that the use of video production initiates and develops key competencies and increases student motivation and engagement towards becoming independent learners. I am also keen to see if this style of learning has the potential to enable deeper learning through the higher order problem- solving skills which production develops.

I am about to embark on a significant project to develop this pedagogy. It will incorporate a multidisciplinary approach to curriculum knowledge and will be extended to involve the wider community through the creation of documentary-style films that will have real audiences and concern real issues as researched, co-constructed and presented by the students themselves.

LIPSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Steve Baker, Principal

Lipson Community College is a thriving inner-city school in Plymouth. In recent years we have been exploring ways to enhance the learning environment as we believe this is key to nurturing students' development as learners. Our research into cognition improvement techniques has shown us that in order to learn effectively, students need healthy food, a stimulating learning environment and opportunities to learn outside the confines of the classroom and school day. As well as improving the menu provided to students during school, we have begun to develop closer ties with parents to ensure that our students receive the proper nutrition for their minds and bodies at every meal. Beyond this, we have looked at various methods of delivering learning. We now have an e-portal designed to help staff and students stay in touch so that students can learn at the pace prescribed by their brains rather than the dictates of the school day. We also involve students in the teaching process as 'lead learners'. This has proved beneficial for classmates as it provides a new dynamic in the classroom and a new way of looking at a subject matter. It is also especially beneficial for the lead learners themselves, who gain a special knowledge of the subject matter and develop leadership skills. Lipson also provides after-hours programmes for family members and local residents, which establishes vital links with the wider community and, in turn, widens the network of learners and thus the learning environment. For this reason too, parents are encouraged to use our website as well (the idea is to equip parents for 'learning conversations' to enrich the learning experience for all our pupils). Another cognition-enhancing learning technique we employ is 'learning by doing'. We have artists in residence on-site to 'teach by example', but students are also encouraged to work beyond the classroom. Earlier this year, students attended a conference facilitated by the Race Equality Council which tackled issues of inclusiveness and equality in schools as part of a wider co-constructing learning agenda. This is a good example of the way in which our students are being given the opportunity to work in new kinds of learning environments - and being supported and empowered to play a much more active role in their own learning.

MONTGOMERY LANGUAGE COLLEGE
Paul Moss, Headteacher

Montgomery is a Full Service Extended School that has recently opened a newly-refurbished wing providing health, social care and family support services. As these processes become integrated into the life of the school, we will reinforce the recognition of the individual needs of our students and their families. At Montgomery, we have been taking forward the personalisation agenda in a number of ways. We have created a learning community for all teaching staff which focuses on key aspects of personalisation and classroom practice: teaching and learning, assessment for learning, emotional intelligence in behaviour management and e-learning. Perhaps our most significant development around personalising the learning environment is the introduction of Pathways for students as indicated below:

- Orange Pathway: 48 key underachieving students follow a radically different programme, based on a rich and personalised experience, seen at first hand in non-mainstream, pilot schools in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. Introduced September 2004.
- Green Pathway: 108 students, average in ability, follow a programme in which 20% of curriculum time is dedicated to modules of work centred on the theme of Enterprise, focusing in part on local initiatives such as the regeneration of Blackpool. Introduced September 2005.
- Lilac Pathway: 120 students, all take two modern foreign languages. The intention is to launch the Middle Years Programme of the International Baccalaureate. This is yet to be undertaken, but key roles have been built into our restructuring of teaching staff to facilitate this. Likely introduction date – September, 2007.
- Turquoise Pathway: 12-15 students, follow programmes including key life skill learning programmes, alongside National Curriculum programmes of study. Introduced September, 2004.

The school strongly believes that different learning experiences should become available as soon as possible, not as part of a 14-19 strategy. Orange Pathway has generated high quality, radically different learning materials for students. Other Pathways promise to create equally exciting and different learning opportunities for our students. Orange Pathway students have been housed in a suite of newly-built rooms, designed by the Research Group, an interior designer and with input from Human Scale in Education. We are still at the early stages of this pilot but indications of high achievement are emerging. In our recent OFSTED inspection in October 2005, the inspection team stated: 'The school regards its duty of care toward all its students as paramount and so this really is a school in which every child matters'. The school has paid huge attention to the physical environment we offer to all of our students, whilst recognising that this is secondary to the learning experience they have, and are committed to focusing on the whole range of our students' needs.

MULBERRY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
Vanessa Ogden, Headteacher

The environment is an essential component of successful learning. Integrated ICT resources are central to any process of personalisation in learning but they are not the only elements of the learning environment that are significant; the visual impact of environments on learning and the quality of the 'living space' are also important. Mulberry School is on the journey towards a fully personalised learning service through ICT. An important step in this process was to achieve new school build through a PFI project that was completed in September 2004. This ensured that every classroom was equipped with interactive whiteboards and many with computer suites. We also established a comprehensive website that allows pupils to submit work to teachers electronically. The next steps for us involve us in the following: a) creating personalised curriculum packages for individual pupils; b) maximising the use of the website by creating a full service 'Learning Gateway' which allows full access to the school's

ICT systems from home through personalised sites for each family and teacher. Mulberry has also taken account of the need the planning and design of the environment to be stimulating. Following the build, we are creating an arts / science project to develop the corridors and living spaces as learning zones, maximising the interactive learning potential of the building itself through work with pupils, designers, artists and the Science Museum.

OXCLOSE COMMUNITY SCHOOL
Mike Foster, Headteacher

As a 'quick win' Building Schools for the Future (BSF) school we are halfway through a refurbishment and new build. Clearly, the re-design of spaces for learning has been number one on the agenda. There has been a huge investment in ICT infrastructure. We have also designed social spaces in the school to meet student needs. We include students with physical and medical difficulties. All students have access to all areas and all curriculum initiatives. We are looking at independent and collaborative learning spaces, which meet the needs of the local partnership as well as our own school. We deliver aspects of a shared Key Stage 4 curriculum with partner schools according to our relative specialisms and have developed our own skills centre. We have redesigned the curriculum to align it with this process.

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI
Paul Rincon, Headteacher

Our physical learning environment has evolved during the last fourteen years with an emphasis on the school building itself being an interactive environment where children can reflect on aspects of their learning. Displays around the school promote and reinforce the areas of the curriculum and contain artefacts purchased from various sources. The displays are permanent but are, however, removed from their spaces for use in the classrooms or to loan to other schools. There is a History staircase, an Art and Culture staircase and various other areas throughout the school which highlight the work that children undertake throughout Key Stage 1 and 2. The artefacts on display are accompanied by work done by the children. Pupil questionnaires reveal the wide range of personal interest in the displays. Some prefer the Mathematics displays; others, the displays of musical instruments. Creating this environment has to be a shared commitment to high quality displays through which, the development of personal interests and inspiration is possible. It is an individual philosophy and one which is a continuous creative process. The 'Classroom of the Future' building was completed three years ago and stands in what was the Junior playground. A modern building constructed from innovative materials, the classroom consists of the component parts of an insect with each area; head, thorax and abdomen being the biosphere, astronomy room and classroom respectively. As part of the extended project for this building, the Junior playground was itself transformed into a forest with river and pond. It is in itself, an 'Ice Age Trail' planted with indigenous trees. This environment promotes the study of earth sciences which reinforces the astronomy and environmental curriculum. There are greenhouses for the propagation of seeds and planting areas for growing vegetables, a wildlife pond and pens for the school animals. This year, the school has acquired a field in North London in order to grow the vegetables to supply its own new catering service. This, in itself, has provided immense opportunities for individual learning programmes. The curriculum and staffing structures are, at present, undergoing a radical change in order to meet our commitment and our approach to 'Every Child Matters' and a 'connected', creative curriculum.

ST PANCRAS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Tom Hammick, Artist and Governor

An innovative and groundbreaking creative project is underway in St Pancras Catholic Primary School. It charts the design and construction of a new building and uses this as a multi-faceted development tool for pupils and teachers. We also hope it will encourage all those involved in school buildings to understand how design can contribute to rising education standards and helping with community cohesion. Once built, the school will be a landmark, eco-friendly learning environment. The project planners have developed new techniques and knowledge around sustainable technology and the environment. The accompanying film and

DVD to the building will include information on all the important aspects of the process: fundraising, writing a design brief, choosing an architect and using ICT to enhance the curriculum. Through this, pupils and teachers can learn about their environment, whilst gaining valuable key skills by contributing to the compilation of the final product itself. This is interactive learning at its most effective. The knowledge from the Project impacts in many different ways. Children helped produce some of the content of the DVD and video through filming, interviewing and surveying. This content then becomes a separate source of learning. Additionally, we hope all those who experience the space will see how the physical environment can facilitate learning. The skills learnt here can then be adapted and transferred across the curriculum. The Project has stimulated children's creativity, independence and willingness to learn. Excitement surrounds all aspects of the build, as some children use sound editing and filming to improve the choreography of performances in the Arts. Those intrigued by the diggers on site will carry out research into hydraulics, keen to build a working model in science. It is this direct involvement that has begun to pay dividends, with a vitalised staff and pupil body, ensuring everybody benefits from the entire learning process.

THE SWEYNE PARK SCHOOL
Jenny Dear, Teacher and Pupil Voice Co-ordinator

The Sweyne Park School is a mixed, community 11-16 comprehensive in south east Essex with 1,305 pupils. Pupils are actively involved in the curricular and extra-curricular life of this busy school through a variety of channels, from pupil voice to staff development and school development planning to primary liaison. Our most recent addition with co-construction in mind has been the development of Pupil Research and Development Groups. These shadow the half-termly staff R&D Groups that focus on a selection of school priorities on aspects such as Assessment for Learning, ICT and staff development. Overseen by a member of the leadership team and running for four weeks, the pupil groups discuss and explore the views of their peer group and pass valuable ideas for future next steps on to staff. The learning environment is greatly enhanced as more and more pupils are getting to grips with the essential demands of learning, motivation and skills development.