



ICT in BSF

An overview

What is BSF?

Building Schools for the Future (BSF) was launched by the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF, formerly the Department for Education and Skills) in February 2003. The Department stated that: "School buildings should inspire learning. They should nurture every pupil and member of staff. They should be a source of pride and a practical resource for the community."

Through BSF, every single secondary school in England will be either rebuilt or remodelled over the next 15-20 years.

BSF is not simply a rebuilding programme. The unprecedented scale of investment - £2.5 to £3 billion per annum - creates a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform the way secondary schools function, bringing not only buildings into the 21st Century but teaching and learning to match.

Partnerships for Schools

Partnerships for Schools (PFS) is the organisation set up by the DCSF and Partnerships UK to manage the delivery of the national BSF programme. PFS also manages the delivery of the Academies programme.

PFS supports, challenges and advises local authorities (LAs) - the procuring body in BSF - to transform education in their area. PFS has experts in design, finance, law, education, ICT, project management and procurement to help LAs to form effective commercial partnerships with the private sector in order to deliver BSF on time and on budget.

So where does ICT come into BSF?

The key component that links buildings with teaching and learning is Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

BSF will provide:

- a step-change in the level of ICT provision in secondary schools in England
- buildings designed to maximise use of ICT
- managed ICT services which guarantee availability and reliability
- incentives to develop the use of ICT in teaching and learning

To facilitate this, BSF provides a very high level of capital funding – equivalent to £1675 for every pupil place provided in the new and remodelled schools. This money is to pay for passive network infrastructure, active network equipment, hardware (computers and peripherals), software and setting up an area-wide managed service for ICT.

Schools are expected to join a managed service funded by an annual revenue charge which will give schools good value when procuring, managing, maintaining and refreshing their ICT infrastructure and equipment.

Lessons Learned

The PFS website has 'lessons learned' from PFS and the early BSF LAs - look in the Library in the new PFS website.

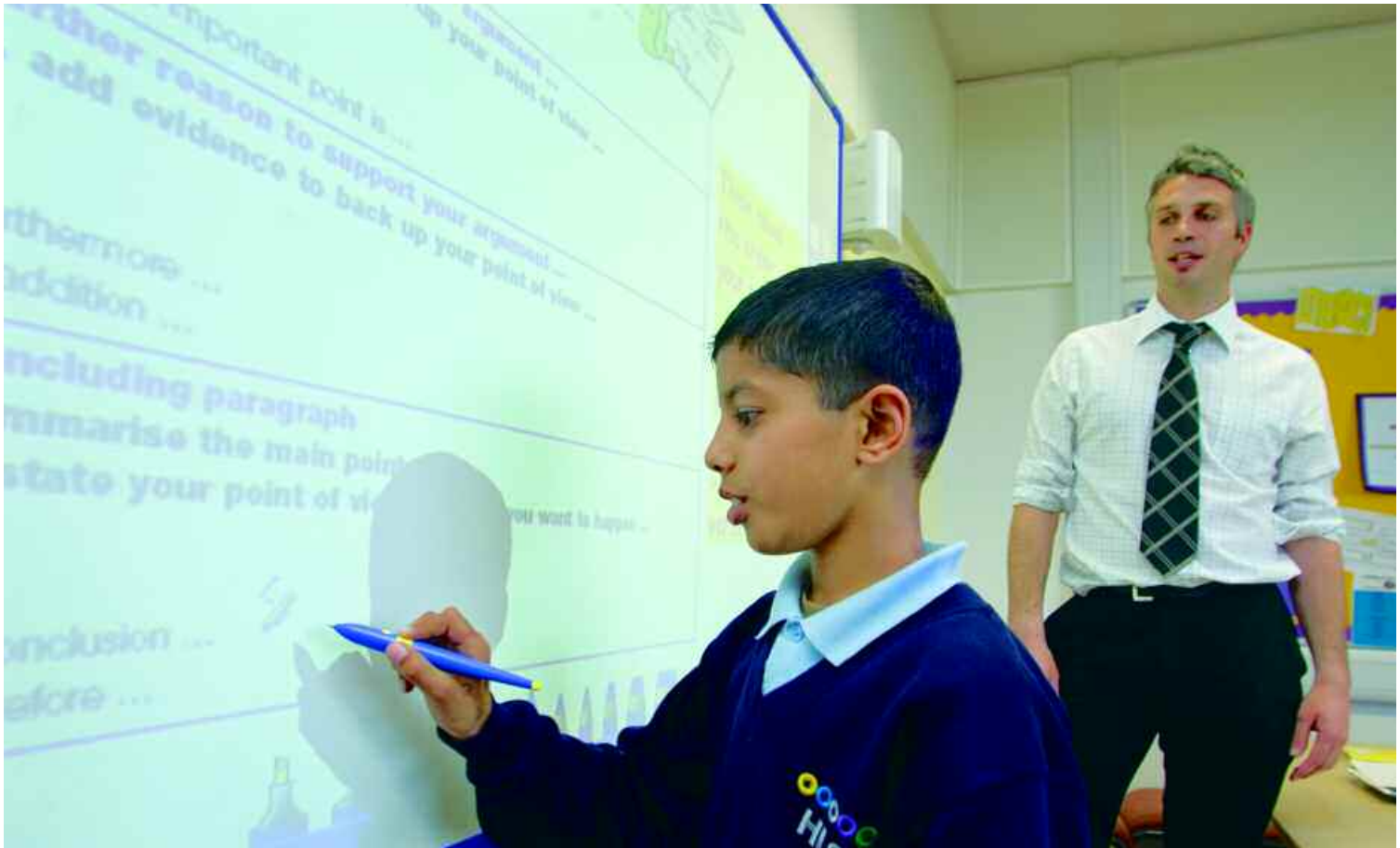
How does spending on ICT help to improve learning and teaching?

Procuring ICT through BSF is not about pulling together a list of the equipment you would like. The whole process begins with the LA and its schools drawing up a strategy for improving secondary education. This is informed by an understanding of the ways in which new technologies can improve educational provision. In turn, the strategy informs the development of an ICT Output Specification which sets out the requirements for the ICT procurement to ensure that the LA's and schools' aspirations are realised. The aim is to establish a commercial partnership with an ICT provider who shares the local vision and brings their expertise and experience to the essential task of making our schools fit for purpose in the 21st century.

Education ICT Advisers from PFS work alongside the LA, supporting and challenging, to ensure that educational improvement stays at the heart of the process.

Does BSF link into the e-Learning Strategy?

PFS works closely with Becta and the DCSF to ensure that the huge capital investment in ICT is used in ways which help to deliver the key targets of the e-Learning Strategy. We have developed a joint ICT Consultancy Framework with Becta which is used by many BSF LAs, and consulted with DCSF on the best ways of using the expertise and experience of City Learning Centres to enhance BSF.



The BSF ICT output specification

It is very difficult to predict the technologies which will have the most positive effect on education in the future, so we don't try to do this. Instead, we focus on the things we would expect the technology and associated managed service to facilitate. These include:

- the development of real and virtual workspaces which help to make effective, personalised learning a reality for all students; which enable teachers and other professionals to focus on their core tasks and be more effective; and which provide parents and carers with easy access to information about learners' achievements and progress
- access to high quality learning materials in a wide range of settings through as wide a range of end-user devices as possible (e.g. desktops, laptops, PDAs, smartphones, games consoles)
- infrastructure which is extremely reliable and easy to use. We talk about ICT becoming "the fifth utility": something we take for granted in the same way as water, gas and electricity and telephony
- freeing schools from the burden of having to procure and manage their own ICT solutions whilst still giving them choice and flexibility.

Contact information

For more information about the BSF programme and Partnerships for Schools, visit the Pfs website:

www.partnershipsforschools.org.uk

Information about the joint Becta/PfS framework for ICT Consultancy, as well as the technical and functional specifications which underpin BSF ICT solutions, can be found at www.becta.org.uk

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Forthcoming Events

Partnerships for Schools Annual Conference
18 September 2008
London Marriott Grosvenor Square

For more information about speakers and the conference programme, visit the Pfs website.

