



Creating a Learning Culture

BSix was set up in 2002 by the Learning and Skills Council in order to raise the ambitions and achievements of young people in the East End. It is a sixth form college of a new type, offering courses at entry through to advanced levels and in a wide range of subject areas.

We are a high-achieving, comprehensive sixth form college with a particular emphasis on planned progression to the next level, employment or university.

Our aims are encapsulated in three statements:

- Aspire, Study, Achieve
- High Standards for All
- A University for Teachers

In the last three years we have made significant improvements both in our data (success rates) but also in the qualitative dimensions of our work: morale, commitment, reflective capacity. As a result, our improvement is deep-seated and sustainable and is reflected in the everyday experience of staff and students.

Ken Warman
Principal



Learning for All

For our staff – A University for Teachers

- MTeach: Our teachers can participate (and around ten do so) in a free Masters in Teaching and Learning delivered by the Institute of Education (IoE) in collaboration with BSix.
- Aspiring Leaders: This year-long programme delivers ten sessions of development aiming to help aspiring leaders acquire skills and experience which will help them succeed in management. Sessions include; ‘data: getting to know and love it’, ‘getting on brilliantly’ a session on running meetings by management guru Annette Zera, and ‘what is leadership? - interviewing successful leaders’ run by the Principal, Ken Warman.
- Coaching Award, Certificate and Diploma: A course accredited by Middlesex University and available to all members of staff. As each participant has to coach a colleague, it is a way of disseminating the “coaching” approach to management throughout the organisation.
- ‘From Sir with love’: a classroom management programme. Our SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) Coordinator also delivers one-off sessions for students on such issues as ‘Being positive about learning’ and ‘Learning how to learn’.

- Teachers' Development or Teachers' Discussions: Seminars on topics such as 'Differentiation' and 'Functional Skills'.
- Management development programme for middle and senior leaders: During the year managers have developed their skills and knowledge as well as exploring the emotional and cultural dimensions of leadership.
- Work Discussion Groups (Sessions led by a consultant psychotherapist): These regular sessions enable participants to explore issues that arise during their professional lives in a safe and supportive environment in order to encourage collaborative working and common values.
- Teacher Leaders: Our Teacher Leaders and Advanced Pedagogy Advisors (subject experts in particular areas such as Mathematics) work closely with individuals and with teams to make improvements in teaching and learning.
- Researcher-in-Residence: Our Researcher-in-Residence (a joint post with the IoE) spent a year at BSix working actively and closely with teachers and students carrying out a range of research projects such as 'The experiences of new teachers at BSix' and 'Peer Assessment in Humanities'.



"A good range of development and mentoring, including a productive partnership with the Institute of Education, helps staff to improve teaching skills" (Ofsted 2009)

- Action Research Projects: Teachers can and do propose research topics and are supported to follow their interest in this area. Projects include 'The Long and the Short of it: An account of action research investigating the impact of varying curriculum delivery schemes on full time vocational courses' and 'Teaching Fundamental Concepts'.
- Cooperative Leadership Projects: These projects are aimed at middle managers who want to develop senior management skills and knowledge. Managers sit in on SMT, carry out Ofsted-type inspection activity and lead on cross-college groups such as College Information Strategy.
- INSET days: These cover a wealth of subjects and opportunities. Recent days focused on Functional Skills and Assessment.
- Big speakers: Professors David Hopkins, Ken Spours, Paul Black and Frank Coffield deliver thought-provoking lectures to our academic staff on topics such as 'What if teaching and learning became our first priority?'

And for our students – Learning Advocacy

- Lesson Observation training (alongside Teacher Leaders): Students attend a three week training course run by an Ofsted Inspector and then carry out developmental ungraded lesson observations on volunteer teachers.
- 'Mystery Shopper' activities and follow-up feedback to college managers: This work helps the College raise its game in providing for students and encourages objectivity and the development of feedback skills in students.
- Teaching and Learning project and feedback to CMT and SMT: During the first few weeks of their course at BSix, students focus on teaching and learning and carry out a survey of their peers' views on their lessons. Learning Advocates agree their findings, summarise and present them to managers at a formal presentation meeting.
- Delivery of seminars at national conferences: Our students are in demand at national conferences run by organisations like LSIS and SCFC and are frequently invited to speak at colleges across the country.
- Principal's Question Time: Termly sessions which invite all course reps to gather questions from their peer group and ask them to SMT at a forum in the theatre. SMT respond and follow-up.
- The 'Great Debate': A student-run whole college discussion on subjects such as 'My learning, whose responsibility?'
- Student Self Assessment Report(SAR): Students write their own version of a SAR which is used in the overall college SAR.
- Involvement in the recruitment of teachers: Students' views are sought in the recruitment of new teachers. Students are taught in mini-lessons by any prospective teachers and they discuss their views with an Ofsted Inspector and jointly propose those most successful for the final stage of interview.
- Membership of governing body and cross-college groups: Students sit on the Quality and Equality Task Group and the e-Strategy Group.



"A learning organisation" is a fashionable phrase. By the measures described above, we are making this statement alive and meaningful. They mean that all layers of the College, staff and students, are engaged in reflecting on what we do, what it means and how we can do it better.

This approach is gaining national recognition for BSix. We were named Representative Organisation of the Year 2009 by LSIS. Our Learning Advocates have spoken at several national conferences and were featured in Ofsted's "Talisman" publication. We have just been awarded Investors in People status and the report is glowing about our "learning culture for all".

www.bsix.ac.uk

0800 3892 947

BSix Brooke House Sixth Form College, Kenninghall Road, London E5 8BP