

# A University For Teachers

“The motto of BSix: ‘a university for teachers’ is at the heart of the College’s learning and development activities”

*(Investors in People report, March 2010)*

**Submission for:**

The City & Guilds Award for Staff Development in Further Education

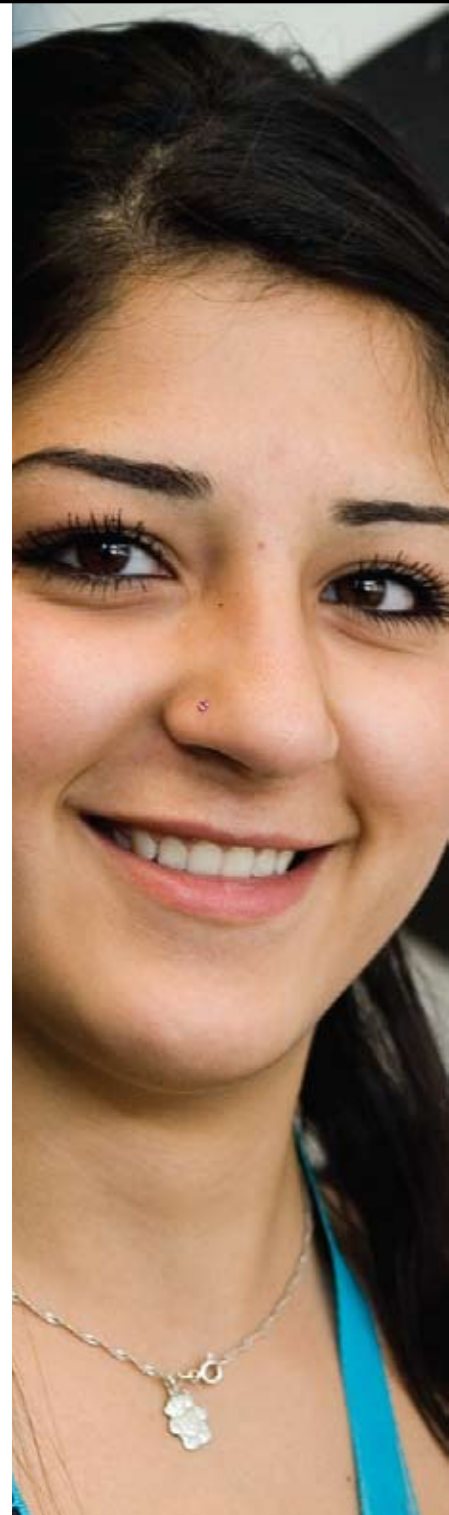
## Project Summary

In 2006 BSix was on the verge of closure or merger. It was characterised by poor outcomes, a bad reputation, high staff turnover and dwindling student recruitment. A new Principal was appointed to turn the College around. A strategy of effecting a deep-seated, sustainable cultural change was introduced. The aim was to transform the everyday experience of students, both in the classroom and of the College's services. This entailed an extensive and innovative Continuous Professional Development programme (CPD) in order to make the College 'a university for teachers'. The premise of this programme was that, if we want our students to be aspirational and high-achieving, then our staff have to be the same.

There are two key characteristics of the programme. First, it is focused on teaching and learning (and increasingly on the delivery of services) as a serious, intellectual activity worthy of continual analysis and debate. Second, it recognises that development is not just about 'training' in technical aspects of work but should also be an exploration of its deeper, emotional, dimensions.

The result is that BSix is now booming. Ofsted reports, national awards, burgeoning student applications and significantly improved outcomes all testify to the qualitative improvement generated by this programme.

Our Investors in People report (March 2010) commented: "The Panel would like to congratulate you on achieving the Investors in People Standard. Generally the Panel would pick out a few areas where the organisation has excelled – in your case you have excelled in all areas and it is a credit to the staff that you have achieved this."



## Aims and objectives

Fundamentally, the aim of the project was to turn BSix around by improving the everyday experience of staff and students, therefore raising results and transforming its reputation.

This aim can be broken down into the following objectives:

- To improve student outcomes
- To improve teaching and learning
- To improve the student experience as measured by 'student voice' activities.
- To improve staff recruitment
- To motivate staff
- To develop internal capacity

These aims and objectives were established in 2006-07 as a result of an extensive consultation with staff, students and external agencies. The new Principal, even before taking up post, met with all staff teams; consulted with all major partners (the LSC, universities and the local authority) and held student voice activities. As a result, three strategic aims were formulated (i) to raise achievement and standards; (ii) to enhance external relations, and (iii) to project a positive image.

This programme has promoted exemplary teaching and learning. The proportion of good or better teaching has risen from 42% in 2007-08, to 53% in 2008-09 and to 72% in 2009-10. The proportion of 'outstanding' (grade 1) teaching has also risen.

Year	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
Outstanding teaching %	8	10	12	24

Ofsted concluded (November 2009) that the College had made 'significant progress' in this respect. Our 2009 ALPS reports rate our BTEC teaching 'outstanding' and our A Level teaching 'excellent'.



## Meeting the sponsors objectives

### • Effective and imaginative work to support staff development

A new post of Vice-Principal: Teaching and Learning was created in 2007 to devise and implement the CPD programme. Key features are:

- **Qualifications:** an MA in Teaching Learning (MTeach) delivered by the Institute of Education; a teaching observation course delivered by a local college; a Coaching Diploma accredited by Middlesex University and delivered in-house.
- **Weekly Friday development sessions (3.45-5.15)** on pedagogy delivered by our own teachers.
- **Management development:** year-long programmes combining internal and external expertise for SMT, CMT and Aspiring Leaders.
- **Work Discussion Groups:** sessions run by psychotherapists from the Tavistock Centre University of London. These create a space, outside of line management structures, in which managers can explore issues at work in order to share ideas, encourage collaborative working and develop common values.
- **Research:** teachers can carry out action research and, in 2008-09, the College had a researcher-in-residence jointly with the Institute of Education in order to explore the effectiveness of its initiatives such as Learning Advocacy and the experience of new teachers. In July 2009 a whole-college research day was held.
- **Student involvement:** the College runs a Learning Advocacy scheme in which students are trained to observe lessons, alongside staff, and to undertake research. The aim is to ensure that students are equipped to judge the quality of their everyday experience.
- **Teacher-led improvement:** outstanding teachers can become Teacher Leaders in order to provide one-to-one support for 'satisfactory' teachers.
- **Advanced Pedagogy Advisers:** internal or external consultants are employed to work with whole departments on the improvement of pedagogical practices.
- **External partnerships:** the College works closely with the Institute of Education. Two Institute staff are on the College's governing body, trainee teachers have placements at the College, its staff deliver training and our staff give lectures at the Institute. Institute personnel are involved in staff appointments. The College also works closely with the QIA (as was) and now LSIS together with the Skills for Life Improvement programme and respected training organisations such as Catalyst.
- **External speakers:** major names in educational thinking run sessions in order to raise the academic aspirations of staff. These have included Professors Ken Spours on 14-19 reform, Frank Coffield on teaching and learning, David Hopkins on powerful learning and Paul Black on assessment for learning.
- **Mentoring and shadowing:** many managers have external or internal mentors and a developing programme of 'work shadowing' is in place.

These are all in addition to the 'usual' offer of colleges – CPD days, external conferences and support for long courses.

### • Effective ways of encouraging and motivating staff

There has been a gradual move from an almost exclusive reliance on external expertise for the delivery of CPD to a reliance on internal capacity in 2009-10. The Friday afternoon CPD sessions, for example, are run by teachers for teachers. This year topics have



included 'Scaffolding for learning', 'Using Mind Genius software', and 'Promoting learning advocacy'. A secondary effect of such sessions is to raise the professional standing and self esteem of staff both by their participation and the symbolic message that pedagogy is important.

Moreover, the sheer scale and availability of development opportunities encourage and motivate staff. Some statistics strengthen this point. In 2008-09 150 staff participated in 1342 recorded staff development events. On average staff participated in at least 9 development opportunities throughout the year. The Investors in People report confirms the impact of this programme. "People frequently commented that at BSix they have been given opportunities that they wait years for in other organisations". (p8) Furthermore, members of staff asked to contribute to a publication, 'Working at BSix', voluntarily cited CPD as a major motivator. "At BSix Senior Management encourages career progression and has worked hard to create opportunities for all staff to reach their full potential. In the past three years I have attended various in-house training sessions, completed my NVQ4 Advice and Guidance and I am now studying the Coaching Diploma initiated by BSix and accredited by Middlesex University. 'Aspire, Study and Achieve' is the sentiment for both students and staff. This is what makes (the College) the place to be". (Sandra Bent, Student Services Manager).

Finally, staff are encouraged to develop themselves. The Aspiring Leaders programme, for example, is specifically designed for staff, teaching and non-teaching and at all levels of the organisation, who are ambitious and wish to take on additional responsibilities. Tina Jawanda, Art teacher, wrote: "Having taken up the Aspiring Leaders programme I have found it very enjoyable plus I have become more motivated and determined to further develop my career at BSix Sixth Form College".

#### • Schemes that allow and encourage personal and professional development

The College encourages personal and professional development through qualifications. Teachers can take MTeach free of charge. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, have access to the Coaching Diploma. Participants have to coach another member of staff, thus combining professional growth (qualification) with personal development (being coached).

Moreover, there are extensive coaching and mentoring opportunities. "People spoke about coaching and mentoring that takes place almost constantly (and) underpins the contribution they make to the organisation's aims" (liP, p8). The Principal has a monthly session with an organisational consultant/coach. The latter has also coached senior and middle managers, particularly about handling difficult people or situations. Several middle managers have long-term mentors, including college senior managers and former Principals. 'From Sir with Love' sessions with our SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) Co-ordinator and Work Discussion Groups allow teachers and managers to explore the emotional impact of their work.

Work shadowing is being used to give staff an insight into working at the next level or an appreciation of the wider college. For example, our Assistant Director: Student Support has shadowed our Head of Science in order to find out more about the curriculum. Our Head of External Relations has shadowed the Principal in order to gain an insight into senior management.

Finally, 10 staff are on MTeach, 18 managers are on development programmes, 11 are on the Coaching Award and 23 on the Aspiring Leaders programme. This means that, in 2009-10, 62 (41%) of 150 staff have been on a long-term development programme.

#### • Schemes that can demonstrate positive outcomes

See the "Outcomes" section below.



## Project management

Student outcomes, staff turnover and lesson observations in 2006-07 all pointed to the need for a cross-college approach to CPD, especially geared towards improving teaching and learning. In summer 2007 therefore a new post of Vice Principal: Teacher and Learning was created. The title was a symbolic statement and the role combined CPD with quality assurance. In 2009 the postholder was promoted to Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality. CPD was transferred to the new post of Assistant Director: Staff and Student Learning.

CPD is subject to the College's quality assurance processes. An annual staff development report is produced. CPD is judged in the College's Self Assessment Report. It is subject to the College's Internal Quality Review (IQR, mini-inspection) process. Sessions are evaluated by staff questionnaires. Our researcher-in-residence undertook three reports on the experience of new teachers, including CPD, and an analysis of the impact of student Learning Advocacy. All departing staff have an exit interview and their experience of CPD at the College is explored. Finally, data are analysed as part of the self-assessment process, particularly student outcomes and the lesson observation grade profile, to gauge the effectiveness of CPD and shape its future direction.

The College meets Equality and Diversity standards. 60% of staff and 76% of students are of BME origin. 56% of staff on the Aspiring Leaders programme and 64% on the Coaching Diploma are of BME origin. Ofsted concluded "educational and social inclusion" is a key strength (March 2009).



## Outcomes and benefits to learners

Ofsted visits in March and December 2007, April 2008 and a full inspection in March 2009 all concluded that teaching and learning was satisfactory. However, in its focused monitoring visit of November 2009 Ofsted concluded that the College had made 'significant progress' in the improvement of teaching and learning. The Inspectors wrote: "Staff report that they have benefited from staff development, particularly peer assessments and the sharing of good practice in their subject specialisms."

The improvement in the observation grade profile can be seen in the table below. It has to be emphasised that the process is extremely rigorous and extensive. 104 observations were held in 2009-10 when there was a teaching workforce of 85. Many of the teachers are co-observed by trained Ofsted Inspectors, many observations are by external consultants, as a result of the IQR process, and many managers have been on an accredited lesson observation course.

Year	Good or better	Satisfactory	Inadequate	No of observations
2007-08	42%	42%	16%	97
2008-09	53%	39%	8%	130*
2009-10	72%	24%	4%	104

\* Includes Ofsted observations

The improvement of teaching and learning and all-round standards, fuelled by our CPD, has led to improvement in outcomes. The overall college success rate has risen significantly

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Success rate	61	65	69

The College's performance in the post-16 league tables has similarly improved. It is important to note here that there has been no change to the College's entry criteria and therefore to the student intake, so the data represent genuine improvement rather than a change in the rules of entry.

Post-16 performance tables				
	2006	2007	2008	2009
Points per student	565.1	583.5	632.8	689.4
Points per subject	188.9	190.5	204.1	219.2

The points score per subject in 2009 was above the national average of 211.7.

The Contextual Value Added (CVA) measure puts the College in the top 5% of schools and colleges in 2008 and 2009. The CVA score of 1065 was the best achieved by any college in London and was described as 'truly remarkable' by the Chair of the local authority (letter, 27th January 2010).

Staffing data also indicate increasing stability and satisfaction and therefore a better quality of provision for students.



**Staff Turnover %**

Year	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
Teaching	20	27	40	17
Non-Teaching	15	19	28	18
Overall	18	26	36	17

**Staff Sickness %**

Year	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
Sickness %	5.7	5.6	4.7	4.3

The quality of the classroom experience has led to an increase in applications for places by young people. Over 30% now give 'word of mouth' as the reason for applying.

**Applications**

Year	06/07 1st Sept	07/08 1st Sept	08/09 1st Sept	09/10 1st Sept	10/11 28th June
Applications	915	750	689	1501	1832

**Student Numbers**

Year	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
Student Numbers	1429	1222	1049	1419

Finally, the impact and innovative nature of our CPD programme has received external validation. In the full inspection of March 2009 Ofsted commented: 'a good range of development and mentoring, including a productive partnership with the Institute of Education, helps improve teaching skills' and 'extensive staff development, including external courses and peer development is showing good impact'. Our student Learning Advocates have featured in Ofsted's Talisman publication (issue 71, November 2009) and have addressed four national conferences. The College won the 2009 LSIS award for Representative Organisation of the Year for this work. Our approach to 'creating a learning culture' is featured in a government publication, College Excellence 2010. In June 2010 the College won the London Education Partnership award for 'Driving achievement forward: achieving successful outcomes at post 16'.

Our staff testify to the extent and impact of development at the College:

*"BSix provides a lot of CPD opportunities for staff to help impart knowledge to students"*

(Kizito Anyanwu, Working at the College)

*"The College should continue improving and giving teachers the opportunity to develop their skill sets to enable them to progress internally or externally"*

(liP report p6)

*"I feel I have become a better teacher for working at (the College)"*

(Jamie Duff, Working at the College)



External trainers also testify to the quality, novelty and extent of CPD at the College

*“I have found the College to be outstanding in its willingness to support the development of its teaching staff.*

*The College has taken the initiative in establishing a strong and extremely successful link with the Institute by which the teaching staff have had access to a degree of support and encouragement that is unique across London post-compulsory provision.*

*The College has been prepared to commit generous resources to do programmes of staff development, and the model provided by (the College), from Senior Management right through to newly appointed staff, is one that all post-compulsory providers would benefit enormously from.”*

(Mike Pinnock, Pathway Leader: In-Service PGCE and Course Leader MTeach, Institute of Education)

*“BSix is extremely impressive in the commitment it makes to support the professional development of staff at every level of the organisation.*

*Great efforts have been made to address some of the significant gaps in teacher and management training by offering seminars on adolescence, consultation groups for middle and senior management teams and coaching for individual managers to support them with some of the challenges encountered in their work.”*

(Emil Jackson, organisational consultant/ psychotherapist, Tavistock Centre)



## Dissemination and the future

Dissemination of the College's approach has already begun. The Principal spoke at a JISC event at the AoC conference (November 2007) on developing staff. Our Deputy Principal and Learning Advocates have addressed four national conferences. The Deputy Principal is running a workshop on 'Creating a learning culture' at the SFCF national conference (June 2010). The Principal, Deputy Principal, Heads of Humanities and Science and several teachers have delivered CPD for the local authority.

Various strands of CPD will be further developed. Graduates of the Aspiring Leaders programme, in year two, will be mentored by – and work shadow – a senior manager and will visit at least one other college. A student-run inspection, modelled on an Ofsted visit, is planned for March 2010 as a development of our Learning Advocacy scheme. Coaching will continue to cascade. 11 members of staff have taken the Coaching Award and have coached 11 peers. They will move on to the Coaching Certificate and continue to coach while they will be followed by a new first year cohort. In this way, shortly, most members of staff will have actively experienced coaching.

In order to encourage reflection and to capture the impact of non-certificated development opportunities, a reflective log will be included in the College Handbook issued to all staff. Line managers will be expected to consult this log and to discuss any coaching or shadowing as learning experiences.

Managers will benefit from a bespoke development programme which will incorporate leadership projects, where managers work together and 'project manage' cross-college functions or events. The Peer Review and Development Group will afford some managers and teachers the chance to carry out lesson observations at other colleges.

As staffing stabilises and self-assessment has become embedded, it is possible to turn to longer-term staff and succession planning. As well as management development programmes, coaching and shadowing, the major theme of 2011-12 will be 'well-being'. As student recruitment increases and the momentum of improvement gathers pace, it is important that we nurture and care for our staff.

Finally, the IIP Assessor noted that "people were very keen to explain that this (university for teachers) applies to all staff, not just teachers" (IIP report, p19). As a result, she recommended that we revise our motto accordingly.

