

Titus Salt School

Building on success



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Visionary leadership and a clear ICT strategy have helped to transform the fortunes of Titus Salt School in Bradford in recent years – and this turnaround was given a further boost by the move to a brand new building in September 2008. The school was originally built in the 1950s to accommodate 400 students, but by 2004, following a Bradford re-organisation from a three tier to a two tier system, 1,380 learners were squeezed into an unappealing range of buildings that were no longer fit for purpose and this fading infrastructure was becoming a major

barrier to future improvement. “As a specialist Maths/ICT school our use of ICT was well advanced, and we were moving towards having SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards in every classroom,” says Head teacher Sue Mansfield, “but because of asbestos and other problems, the buildings were severely limiting our future technology development plans.”

Fortunately for Sue and her leadership team, a review of the entire school stock in Bradford coincided with the creation of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, and the city became a Phase 1 Pathfinder for the national project. Titus Salt thus became one of the first secondary schools in the country to benefit from the largest single schools capital investment programme for over 50 years.

“The BSF journey has been quite an amazing one in many respects,” says Ian Morrel, Deputy Head teacher and Chair of the Phase 1 Schools' Steering Group for ICT. “The partnership with Sun Microsystems, AMEY ICT and Steljes meant that we were able to think very carefully within an established contractual framework about what was available in the market and how we could develop our strategy. As a school we're very keen to be at the forefront of educational change and development.”

As it is involved in the majority of Phase 1 BSF projects, Steljes (the exclusive representative for SMART Technologies in the UK) was ideally positioned to help by offering valuable advice to the school on how

to plan and develop its ICT. “We wanted flexible teaching and learning spaces with instant and universal access to ICT without having to think about it,” Ian explains. “Matthew Pearson of Steljes delivered a number of ICT training days over a two-year period, which expanded people's knowledge of what technology was available, and around 18 months before the building was due to be completed, we created ICT champions for each subject. This was part of our strategy to keep staff involved and informed at every stage of the design and development process so that their ICT preferences were accommodated where possible.”

As a result of this thoughtful and inclusive approach, the new building is equipped throughout with the latest interactive learning technologies to suit the needs of each department. Every space now has a SMART Board interactive whiteboard, and each faculty has a SMART AirLiner™ wireless slate as well as document cameras. According to Ian, this technology is already changing teaching practice: “The use of this new technology allows us a great deal more interactivity with students, from touching a SMART Board to writing on a wireless slate is wonderful. We're actually moving beyond that now and saying 'here's an AirLiner, so you can work within groups and can move it around the classroom', and we are developing these new technologies.”

With its practical layout, pleasant workspaces and generous corridors, the state-of-the-art new school building is the result of a similarly collaborative approach. “There was



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a large degree of democracy in the design process,” says Sue Mansfield. “Students, staff and our leadership team were all involved in a series of workshops, meetings with architects, and visits to other schools to look at interesting features. The new building is a direct reflection of what staff and students wanted, and we’ve deliberately planned out potential issues.

The superb new technology - enabled learning environment has already had a huge impact on the school’s students. Reflecting on the improvements they have realised so far, Ian Morrel comments: “What I and the other staff found quite striking is that the introduction of SMART Boards really did engage boys a great deal. As a school we were part of the Excellence in Cities programme looking at the gender

difference as our boys were under-achieving in relation to girls. Through the use of SMART Boards and other curriculum changes we’ve reduced the gender gap for GCSE results from 25% down to 6%.”

Titus Salt School is committed to further developing its ICT strategy to provide students and teachers with an even broader choice of technology tools in future. “Education should be leading rather than following industry, so that when our students get jobs they know how to use the latest technology,” concludes Head teacher Sue Mansfield. “We therefore want to be at the forefront of using technology to drive our core purpose and help us to do the job more effectively.”

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