

Leadership & People Development Highly Commended 2015 Hampshire County Council Educational Opportunities

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Reading Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, in partnership with GallifordTry and Balfour Beatty created a working group to optimise their schools programme. Their objectives – to improve the educational experience of pupils, ensure local residents benefit from the works, and to highlight construction industry career opportunities. Each partner championed the initiative within their own organisation, offering equal time and commitment in creating and owning the outputs. This has enabled a consistent joined-up approach to each school.

One of the group's successful initiatives is the creation of a universal 'educational opportunities' toolkit that can be utilised by any contractor or any school. It defines a common process to facilitate engagement with schools for the duration of the construction activity and the creation of an implementation plan. The toolbox includes process maps for outline engagement strategies, agreed activities for the project delivery and site teams to work with the pupils and templates to support school timetabling.

A great deal of work has gone into ensuring the toolkit is user-friendly, jargon free and can be understood by pupils. This has been a cultural shift for those working within the construction sector and both teachers and site teams collaborated closely to achieve an appropriate and successful solution.

The toolkit provides the opportunity for children to learn everything from planning and building, to maintaining a school. It is also an opportunity for the contractors, the client and delivery/design team to inspire the next generation of construction workers, mindful of the need to generate and encourage female and multi-ethnic involvement into the industry. A key outcome has been the strong working relationships built between the schools and site teams. The construction phase, which was always viewed as an inconvenience for the school and the children, has been transformed into an opportunity to enhance the learning and experience for children.

Judges comments

The judges felt that this is an impressive and collaborative initiative built on the delivery of 2,500 primary places across 11 primary school sites over two years.

A working group which included a Head Teacher from local Alfred Sutton Primary School set out to improve the educational experience for children. The team have created an impressive educational 'Build – Learn – Grow' toolkit for schools.

