

ReStructuring

Moves to smaller scale - home bases, schools-within-schools (SWS)

Case Study: Bishops Park College, Jaywick, Essex

STRUCTURES – 'Place, space and human being'

Staff who joined Bishops Park early on were able to watch as the new building grew just across the playground. It was an awe-inspiring experience. From the futuristic look of the building (one member of staff likened it to 'teaching in the Starship Enterprise') to the cleverly designed grounds with their pastel 'seaside' colours and textural pieces of artwork, Bishops Park College was a building of which its students (who had had considerable input at every stage of the design process), and the community of Jaywick could be justifiably proud.

It succeeded though, on far more levels. Inside, there was light and space, which created a sense of openness and wellbeing. Each of the three 'Schools within a School' (SWAS) was centred around an atrium, high and airy, which formed a central meeting space for the mini-school that could be used both formally and informally. There were classrooms which themselves could be changed by folding back a dividing wall from a small classroom to a much bigger teaching space, key for the team teaching which was Bishops Park's signature style, and finally, a degree of visibility which did away with any of the dark corners which allow opportunities for bullying or other undesirable behaviour.

Case Study: Stantonbury Campus, Milton Keynes

STRUCTURES – creating 'schools' within the school

The school, because of its size, was divided into five Halls. Four Halls for years 8-11 comprising 500/400 students and one Hall for years 12-14. Each Hall was based in its own building and joint Halls shared a Science, Design Technology and Computer block. The leadership team of each Hall comprised a Head of Hall, two Team Co-ordinators, responsible for the overview of their paired year teams both for curricular and Personal, social education, and Curriculum Co-ordinators who had responsibility for their curriculum within the Hall. Approximately thirty staff belonged to the Hall. Each Hall was supported by its own secretarial staff. Students stayed in their Hall for Integrated Studies, Languages, Maths, Art, Music and Drama. They went outside of the Hall to their shared Block for Science, Design-Technology and Computer Science. The Halls became small schools within the whole school. All Halls followed the same curriculum and had Hall Student Councils. They shared the Central Resource Area and Library as well as the Theatre and Leisure Centres, sports fields and dining rooms.

Case Study: Madeley Court School

STRUCTURES – Minischools or Schools within a School (SWAS)

Ownership, the sense of a shared life and the development of co-learning grew from the positive teacher-pupil relationship that was the intended outcome of the mini-schools system introduced in 1977. The school was broken up into six mini-schools of about 100 children each in the first three years; this then flowed into 'learning communities' in Years 10 and 11 each numbering half the year group and geared more to blocked subject faculties.

Each mini-school had four core teachers of Maths, Science, English and Social Science who formed the 'base' and two tutors from 'out base' subjects – P.E., the expressive arts etc. This territory or base was the children's own and everything for the child began and ended up in the base. The school, a traditional three-decker box shape, housed two mini-schools on each floor. Each was accessible by its own staircase and was not a through way to anywhere else. Each had four linked open plan areas, a small science lab, a parent-teacher office and toilets. When a child comes to school it is to his or her own small school which they help to maintain, decorate and run – each mini-school had its own weekly Student Council - and was in effect theirs.

Each mini-school school has its own headteacher and each mini-school team stayed with their group of children for the whole three years to ensure continuity and lasting relationships. The purpose behind the mini-school concept was to develop close and positive relationships between teacher and taught and thus render unnecessary the traditional and artificial divide between academic work and pastoral care. It also gave the 'base' teachers the ability to teach in teams across the specialist subjects and promoted collaboration and community. In fulfilment of these aims mixed ability teaching was practised throughout the school.

Case Study: Stanley Park High School

STRUCTURES – A move to a schools-within-schools empowerment, whereby every child is known and valued

Stanley Park High School operates a four small schools model, each located around a central learning space that is vibrant at all times, and very much the heart of the school. Resultantly, there has been a move to flatter leadership and management structure within each of the schools. Each school has a community of approximately 350 students, enabling human scale relationships to grow and develop. Students view them very much as their 'home school'.

Environment as the third teacher

Case Study: HIGH TECH HIGH, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

STRUCTURES – with parents and the community

"The school is housed in a renovated warehouse on the sprawling former Navy training base. Half the building is a vast open space under thirty five foot high, sky-lit ceilings from which hang brightly painted ducts and drop lighting. The space, known as the Great Room, is divided into four workstation suites each having clusters of desks and Internet linked computers. Because of the low partitions it is possible to see what is going on in the Great Room from any standpoint. In the other half of the warehouse there are more conventional classrooms each with a four foot by six foot smart board that projects the contents of a lap top computer and also laboratories fitted out for mechanical engineering, biotechnology, video production and animation"

Case Study: Sir William Burrough Primary School

STRUCTURES – Environment as 'the third Teacher':

Sir William Burrough is housed in an old Victorian building. The quality and care of its upkeep and vibrancy stands in sharp contrast to much of the area around it. The classrooms and public areas of the school are a proud celebration of the children's work and worth, whilst the playgrounds offer endless opportunities to build camps, climb trees, and tackle a jungle gym – a true manifestation of the environment as the third teacher

Flexible use of time determined by teams according to task and context

Case Study: St. Nicholas School

STRUCTURES – flexible use of time and team according to need:

The school functions through strong teamwork from the classroom upwards including specialist teams, departments (Key Stages) project teams and a range collaborative work between teachers, teachers and non-teaching staff and teachers and other professionals. We support the development of teachers in their training courses as well as social workers, nurses and psychologists.

Case Study: Stantonbury Campus, Milton Keynes

STRUCTURES – flexibility supporting curriculum design

In order to promote the above values, an integrated curriculum was devised by a cross-curricular team of teachers. Traditional academic subjects were taught through projects. For example, The Environment, The individual and Society, Understanding the Past, Communications, Time to Learn. Subject specialist teachers advised on Historical content, Geographical content, etc. Emphasis was on working together as a team with year group staff sharing expertise to deliver the curriculum. Consequently, it was important for the teachers to have lengthier blocks of TIME (9hours per week) with their students combining their role of a tutor, delivering personal and social education, with their integrated studies teaching; at one time this programme was called SHARED TIME. This way of organising the curriculum enabled the development of relationships between the students and the teachers. It also greatly enhanced their knowledge of each other.

Flexible use of teams committed to collective planning and a collegiate sharing of talent and expertise

Case Study: St. Nicholas School

STRUCTURES – flexible use of time and team according to need:

The school functions through strong teamwork from the classroom upwards including specialist teams, departments (Key Stages) project teams and a range collaborative work between teachers, teachers and non-teaching staff and teachers and other professionals. We support the development of teachers in their training courses as well as social workers, nurses and psychologists.