BSF Photo Competition

In this new academic year, BSF is launching a photographic competition for students across Leicester.

The aim is to capture images of your newly built or refurbished schools and submit them for the chance to win some fantastic prizes!

With categories including built environment, internal/external spaces, selfies, Photoshop and low-fi/pinhole, BSF encourages budding photographers to get involved.

The images submitted as part of this competition will form part of the lasting legacy of Leicester’s BSF programme.

All shortlisted entries will be viewable online, as well as being displayed at a city centre exhibition space.

Photos can be taken using your phone, a digital camera or SLR, and should be submitted to bsf@leicester.gov.uk for consideration by Friday 19 December 2014.

If you are interested in finding out more, we can arrange for BSF to address your staff members and/or student body. Please contact Gail Pringle for more details.

Dear BSF Schools...
Seven schools have been handed over from Miller Construction UK this summer. They are: New College, Sir Jonathan North Community College, Moat Community College, Babington Community College, Ash Field Academy, Ellesmere College and English Martyrs’ Catholic School. We hope you are settling in well to your new learning environments, and would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and successful 2014/15 academic year!
Digital Skills
UK Taskforce

From September 2014, schools in England will teach a new ‘computing curriculum’, which is aimed at providing a balanced knowledge of ICT and computer science while improving digital literacy.

According to the Digital Skills Taskforce, schools need far more support to implement this. Sixty percent of teachers, when surveyed, claimed that they felt uncomfortable teaching the new curriculum, while central government has earmarked just £3.5 million – or £175 per school – in funds to help them achieve this.

BSF funding is enabling schools to make a much greater contribution to pupils’ access to digital technologies, while the DigiLit Leicester project team are working to improve digital literacy among both pupils and school staff.

Josie Fraser, ICT Strategy Lead for the BSF team was featured in the Digital Skills Taskforce consultation report:

“The people who could potentially most benefit from digital access are typically people facing the biggest barriers to access and skills. Infrastructure, connectivity and device ownership aside, the biggest barrier to being able to engage with, take advantage of, and be an active citizen in online environments is digital literacy”.

BSF aims to address this imbalance. By the end of the programme, all pupils in Leicester will benefit from state-of-the-art computer suites, iPads, and classroom AV equipment. The new facilities being built by BSF are designed to allow pupils to use these resources to their maximum potential. School staff are also being trained in new techniques to allow them to effectively incorporate technology into their lesson plans.

DigiLit Leicester was one of five winners of the Reclaim Open Learning innovation contest, sponsored by the Digital Media and Learning Hub, MIT Media Lab and the MacArthur Foundation. The award brought the team’s work international recognition.

DigiLit Open House Event

DigiLit’s Open House event will take place on 11 September at Crown Hills Community College.

An award-winning programme focused on improving access to and understanding of technology among individuals. The DigiLit team is a partnership between Leicester City Council, De Montfort University and the city’s 23 secondary and SEN schools.

Councillor Vi Dempster, Assistant City Mayor for Children and Young people will also be in attendance, along with LCC senior staff, managers and school staff.
14 June: Babington

New £13.5 million building nearing completion.

Features include amphitheatre, flexible classrooms and a ‘peace garden’.

New building is three storeys rather than two.

Old building to be demolished and grounds converted to playing fields.

On 2 September, Babington featured in the Leicester Mercury again after the school was handed over from Miller Construction UK.

25 July: Ellesmere

£11.4 million project. Handed over on 11 August.

New site on Braunstone Lane East

Students will move in on 3 September.

Ellesmere is expanding to take children from the age of six this term, and reception age children from next year.

30 August: City of Leicester

£26 million complete new build.

Opening ceremony on 29 August featured a live musical performance and remarks from Cllr Vi Dempster.

Features include an outdoor amphitheatre and dedicated sixth form centre.

Leicester College Apprenticeship Awards

Leicester College’s inaugural Apprenticeship Awards take place on 25 September. The awards recognise achievement by young people in apprenticeships, as well as the contribution of employers and businesses to their development.

Sophie Cox and Mylie Brown are business administration apprentices at LMEC, BSF’s building delivery partner, and are nominated for the Level Two Intermediate award and Outstanding Newcomer respectively.

Though neither Sophie nor Mylie had worked in administration before, both have made remarkable progress. A mere two months into her tenure, Sophie had the confidence to assist in training Mylie when she was taken on, while she has remained consistently ahead of her college work.

Mylie has even advanced to the level two phase of her apprenticeship within the period of study for level one – an outstanding achievement.

Additionally, both Mylie and Sophie are working on Leicester College’s Apprenticeship Ambassador Programme, going into some of BSF’s schools to present to pupils on the benefits of an apprenticeship.

LMEC’s Lucy Neal said:

“Both Mylie and Sophie have participated enthusiastically in every task presented to them. Both have impressed with their willingness to commit to their work. However, it is their commitment to their ongoing development that is most encouraging. I am determined that they will finish their apprenticeships head and shoulders above their peers.”

LMEC themselves are also nominated for the award for Outstanding Contribution to Apprenticeships by an Employer.
Sharing resources through open licencing

Leicester City Council (LCC), in association with the DigiLit Leicester Project, is launching an initiative to help share educational resources among schools, digitally.

Currently, resources created in community and voluntary-controlled school are protected by copyright as the intellectual property of the local education authority – in this case, LCC. The council is giving permission for schools to openly licence educational resources, so more students can benefit from them.

Online and digital resources are an increasingly important resource for schools. By taking part in this initiative, schools will benefit from a far wider range of worksheets; lesson plans; revision guides; presentations and staff development guides. The main requirement is an acknowledgement of the original source and of any changes made to the document.

Creative Commons Licencing has been chosen as the platform for the scheme, as it is well-established, standardised and internationally-recogised.

In the case of voluntary aided schools, foundation schools or academies, copyright on resources will largely be the responsibility of governing bodies. LCC would like to encourage all schools to get involved in the open sourcing scheme, and will provide any necessary support to those that do.

It should be noted that all students, whichever type of school they attend, own the intellectual property rights to any work they produce.

A briefing and consultation session is scheduled for 23 September, 3.30-4.30pm (time to be confirmed). All stakeholders are welcome to attend. Please contact sarah.bywater@leicester.gov.uk for more information.

iPad orchestra performance

The next performance of the Ash Field Academy iPad Orchestra is on 28 October. On the day before (27/10/2014), there will be a performance and seminar for other Leicester schools, with the aim of gaining more support for the orchestra throughout the city.

BSF Arts and Culture Lead Mike Preston aims to create a regional project involving the BBC Concert Orchestra so that students can compose and perform alongside professional musicians. The ultimate goal is to make a documentary charting the success of this innovative project.