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**Architects in Residence**  
Designing a Greener London  
Evaluation

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# Architects in Residence: Designing a Greener London

## Evaluation

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## Introduction

In April 2006, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), and RIBA Trust in partnership with Arts Inform established a programme *Architects in Residence* to develop a CPD framework, which would include training architects to work on projects in schools with teachers. Architects and teachers would work together on projects, and the CPD framework would comprise the training for, and delivery and evaluation of the projects.

In January 2007, RIBA London Region and RIBA Trust / Arts Inform established architecture and the built environment programme, *Architects in Residence: Designing a Greener London* and decided to use the advance training of architects and teachers who were to be involved in this programme and the delivery of the programme as a whole to trial the CPD framework.

School students in primary and secondary schools and their teachers were invited to work with architects, as part of a curriculum focussed programme, to develop their plans for a greener London neighbourhood or locality. Best work was exhibited at the RIBA during Architecture Week 2007. Fourteen partnerships between schools and architects' practices were established. A list of partnerships and details of the project management team are given at the end of the document

### **Purpose of Evaluation**

This evaluation looks at the extent to which the pilot provided an effective template for a practitioner partnership of architects and teachers, which could be used for CPD for both sides of the partnership and form the basis for future schools projects. In particular the evaluation considers whether the pilot enabled planned work to be produced:

- to time
- to standard
- with sufficient levels of satisfaction amongst the participants

# Findings

## Main Conclusion

- All 14 partnerships were able to produce work in time for the exhibition in mid-June, and to an extremely high standard
- High levels of satisfaction were expressed by participants

## Main Findings

- Training of architects and teachers together at the start of a partnership project was effective in establishing the partnership
- All projects defined their aims and student outputs clearly and carried out their chosen tasks in a focussed way
- The timetable was demanding, but all projects were able to produce work to a high standard and meet deadlines
- At the exhibition the majority of presentations were assessed as either very good or outstanding
- Both architects and teachers found the experience particularly valuable for themselves and their organisations, in different ways for example:

*“As a new, young practice, we are hoping to break into the education sector through small projects undertaken direct with schools. The opportunity to work within a school on a project such as this was invaluable in that it enables us to demonstrate experience with working directly with both staff and pupils on a design project, both in terms of introducing them to the principles of building design, but also as a way of demonstrating to potential clients that we have experience of consultation with and working closely with schools.”*

## Project Methodology

The project was divided into four stages and at the conclusion of each stage a “light touch” evaluation was carried out. A briefing was sent out to architects and teachers in advance of the project

Stages:

- 1 Joint training of architect and teachers – preparing a project plan. (March – April)
- 2 Launching the project in school – architect makes presentation to students, leads site visit, student brief issued, project aim and output finalised (By end April-early May)
- 3 Programme implemented in school supported by architects’ visits; RIBA selectors then visit schools, students make presentations; work selected for exhibition (By beginning of June)
- 4 Exhibition, competition, assessment, celebration, praise (15 June)

At the training sessions each architect-teacher partnership was asked to develop joint plans for their respective projects. They were provided with a handbook containing a project plan proforma and were assigned one of the two project coordinators. At the end of the session, all architects and teachers filled in questionnaires.

All architects were asked to have visited their school by the end of the first week in May, to make a presentation to the students, and provide a brief for the teacher and students. Project coordinators visited each school, briefed the architects on presenting to students and supported the partnerships in finalising the aims and proposed student outputs. Project coordinators prepared a report for the evaluator on project launch activities.

During May students worked on the programme in schools, supported by visits from the architect. Between 4 and 11 June RIBA selectors visited each school and selected the best of the work for the exhibition. The selectors prepared an assessment for the evaluator of progress in each school and of the standard of the work at the end of stage three.

The exhibition of student work opened on 15 June and continued until 14 July. On the first day of the exhibition, judges assessed each school’s exhibit according to three criteria – originality, quality of presentation, and relevance to the locality.

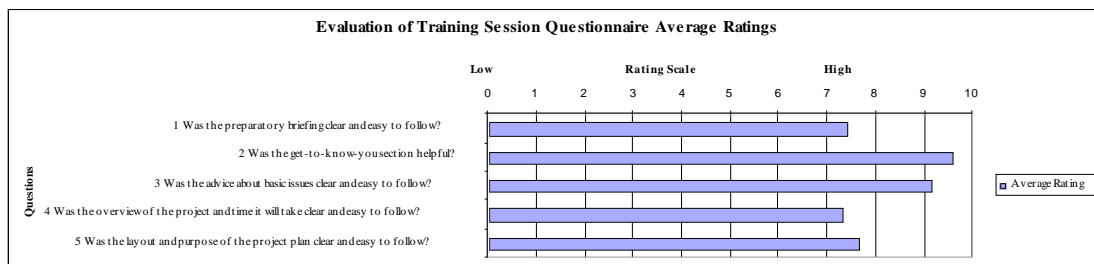
At the end of the project each architect and teacher was sent a simple final evaluation form and asked to send it direct to the evaluator.

# Evaluations

## Stage 1

The joint training sessions were very successful:

- Most participants found the preparatory briefing clear and easy to follow (average rating of 7.2 out of 10).
- the initial get-to-know you section of the session was extremely helpful (average rating of 9.6 out of 10)
- the advice about basic issues such as project budget, health and safety procedures, police checks, and insurance was extremely clear and easy to follow (average rating of 9.1 out of 10)
- the overview of the project and the likely time it would take was very clear and easy to follow (average rating of 7.3 out of 10)
- the layout and purpose of the project plan were very clear and easy to follow (average rating of 7.6 out of 10)



- At the briefing sessions architect/teacher partners produced project plans and project timetables

## Stage 2

- Twelve projects were running on time. Two projects were running late and might have difficulty in catching up on the original timetable.
- Architects had made presentations to twelve of the fourteen schools by the target time of the end of the first week in May.
- All projects had defined their aims and student outputs clearly and were well-placed to carry out their chosen tasks in a focussed way; all projects had stated clearly what the students would produce and suggested there would be a strong emphasis on practical task-based activities by the students.
- The project aims and proposed student outputs fitted broadly within the parameters set out in the handbook., but two projects had not explicitly articulated how they were 'green'.
- Projects had been encouraged to identify objectives for their own purposes where this was useful but in order to streamline monitoring and reduce paperwork these had not been monitored centrally.
- The original intention of gathering feedback through questionnaires had been replaced by interactive support and monitoring by the project coordinators. This seemed a sensible change, reduced the burden on the projects themselves and was unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the quality of the results. The strategic benefit of this would be more apparent at the end of the programme.

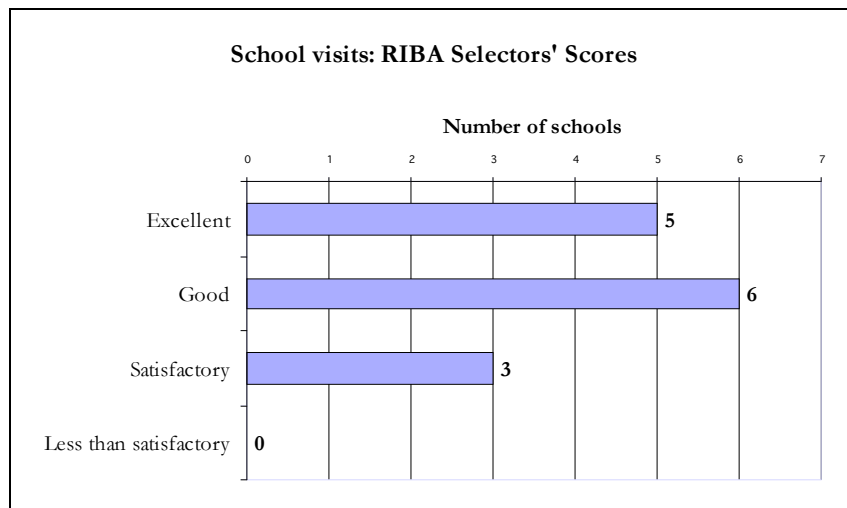
## Stage 3

All projects were on course by this stage and were well-prepared for the exhibition.

When the RIBA selectors visited schools between 4 and 11 June:

- Students in four schools gave formal presentations and in the other ten schools students were able to talk about their work more informally
- Nine schools had their work ready for exhibition, four had completed their tasks but had not yet prepared it for exhibition, and only one school still had work to do
- the two schools that were late at stage 2 had caught up.

The RIBA selectors assessed the work of each school as a whole, taking into account originality of ideas, quality of presentation, and relevance to the locality or neighbourhood:

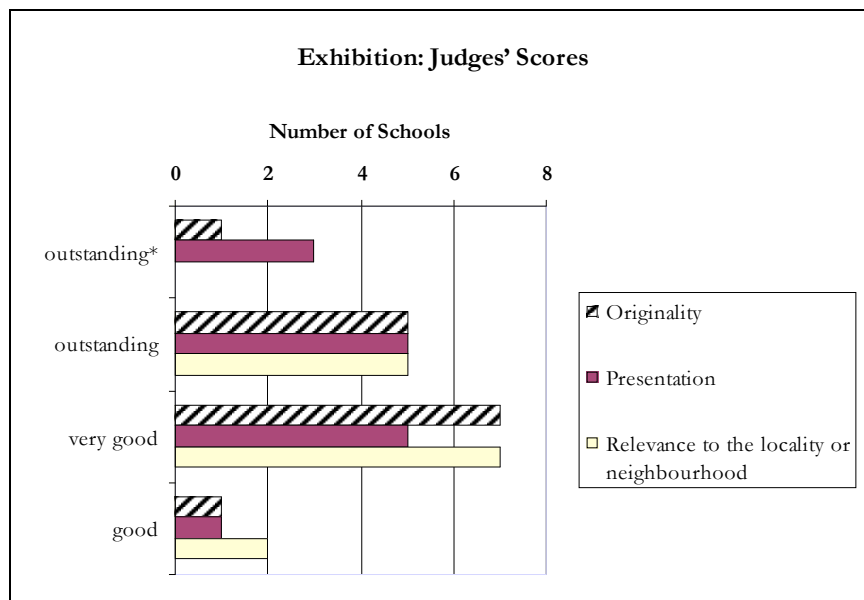


## Stage 4

The best work from each school was selected for the exhibition. All fourteen schools had work of an exhibitable standard.

- The one school that was falling behind at stage 3 had caught up, producing work to a high standard
- The judges scored the entries on three parameters: originality, quality of presentation, relevance to the locality or neighbourhood
- On all three parameters the majority of presentations were either very good or outstanding
- Some entries were so good that on the day the judges introduced a higher score of 'outstanding\*'

In detail the full pattern of the judges' scores was



## Throughout All Stages

There was considerable contact between the architects' practices and the schools:

- The architects visited, or were visited by, their respective schools from 4 to 7 times.

## Feedback

A wide range of positive comments was sent back in the final evaluation.

Teachers' comments on the main benefits included:

- An awareness of architecture and focus to reflect on architecture
- Students had an opportunity to find out about work/office life
- Students had become keen to be architects
- The project went beyond the national curriculum

Teachers' suggestions included:

- More time to work on the project
- More notice of the project
- More time to look at the exhibition
- More specific briefing, especially on green design
- Ability to see previous projects and understand expectations
- Funding for expenses

Teachers' other comments included:

- Very much enjoyed it
- Would like to participate next time
- The architects were brilliant
- The RIBA event was well-organised
- The children learnt a lot

Architects' comments on the main benefits included

- Contact with schools, experience of working with children
- Understanding of school environment
- Great opportunity to contribute to the community
- A good scheme for a corner of the playground
- Competition was good for the students
- Showcasing of design and architecture

Architects' suggestions included:

- Some contribution to costs
- A debriefing
- More extensive initial arrangements

Architects' other comments included:

- Challenging and rewarding
- Well-organised

The sponsors both sent very positive emails.

The Project Management Team's comments included:

- In all the partnerships mutual respect for each other's professions was palpable

The Project Management Team's suggestions included:

- Ensuring that the people attending the training were the same as the people involved in delivering the projects: in the case of one architect and one teacher this had not happened and the result slowed up implementation.
- Ideally the programme should have been set up so that two full terms were allowed for carrying it out
- More space for the exhibition to ensure that all high quality entries can be included (one school had offered two competing high quality entries but there was space to exhibit only one)
- Incorporating more explicitly into the timetable time spent on paperwork, feedback and evaluation
- Explicit explanations in the handbook and during the training sessions of the role of the coordinators and the purpose of their school visits.

## Conclusion

The project was a successful pilot for a future programme.

Where problems were encountered the materials and methods were revised. In its iteratively modified form the project

- Had a successful support structure for the partnerships (through the training and coordinators)
- Resulted in a high standard of work
- Produced positive feedback from the participants

It will provide a useful template for future projects.

## Recommendation

Much has already been done to change the guidance and reference materials so that they reflect the experience of the pilot and will be of maximum support for future programmes.

Work so far has:

- Kept material as brief as possible
- Differentiated the documents clearly (initial briefing, training materials, evaluation kit, reference document of examples)
- Developed the use of information technology
- Cut to a minimum any duplication of the same material in different documents.

**This work should continue and take into account the feedback in this evaluation.**

Phil Gagg, 20 July 2007 (Performance Management Consultant)

## Appendix

### Architect/School Partnerships

| <i>School</i>                   | <i>Architects' Practice</i> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Curwen Primary School           | erect architecture          |
| Fossdene Primary School         | Tughela Gino Architecture   |
| Heronsgate Primary School       | Burd Haward Architects      |
| James Wolfe Primary School      | Buschow Henley Architects   |
| Kidbrooke Park Primary School   | avanti architects           |
| Linton Mead Primary School      | Panter Hudspith Architects  |
| Malmsbury Infant School         | AOC Architecture            |
| Rockcliffe Manor Primary School | RCKa Ltd                    |
| Torriano Primary School         | Charlotte McLean Architects |
| Charlton School                 | Charlick & Nicholson        |
| Crown Woods School              | Brady Mallalieu Architects  |
| Quinton Kynaston School         | Satellite Architects        |
| St. Marylebone CE School        | BDP Architects              |
| Westminster City School         | Wilkinson Eyre Architects   |

### Management Team

| <i>Name</i>         | <i>Role Organisation</i>          |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Frances Morrell     | Joint Chief Executive Arts Inform |
| Linda Payne         | Joint Chief Executive Arts Inform |
| Rob Wilson          | Exhibitions Curator RIBA          |
| Judy Ovens          | Schools Coordinator               |
| Suzanna Prizeman    | Schools Coordinator               |
| Pauline Lord        | Photographer                      |
| <br>Miranda Housden | <br>Director RIBA London          |