

# Best for the West



## The newsletter of the Partnership between Gateshead Council and Hookergate and Ryton Schools

### Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Funding - Is it still available?



The work continues towards an exciting vision of a new school for the West. You may have seen press reports about cuts in public finance and although the new Government is carrying out a wide ranging spending review there is no specific mention of cutting BSF funding. We continue to work hard in bringing about the Council's vision of creating a new state of the art school on a new site, "by retaining Ryton Comprehensive, but developing its offer to the whole community by incorporating the best and many features of Hookergate".

### What Progress Has Been Made?

The Governors of both schools, the Council and other partners, such as Inspired Spaces (Gateshead's Local Education Partnership), have met many times to move the process forward. Specifically:

- The two schools are collaborating extremely well in filling teaching and leadership posts. To support continuity for students and security for staff, three vacancies at Ryton have already been filled by staff currently at Hookergate.
- A member of Hookergate's Governing Body has been appointed to Ryton's Governing Body building another important bridge between the two schools and communities.
- As well as the Headteachers working very closely together on a range of issues, teachers from both schools have been brought together to discuss their vision and hopes for the new school. These meetings have been very successful.
- Pupils from both schools have been asked about their views on a new school. Both schools have identified "Design Champions". These students will be an important link into the wider views of students in both schools. The Design Champions will follow through the process from visioning to design of the new school.
- Progress has been made in identifying potential new sites for the new school building. The final site will be chosen by the Council's Cabinet following recommendation from both schools' Governing Bodies and after public consultation.
- A wide ranging and detailed "Transition Plan" is being worked on by all partners that identifies how we create a new school where all students will feel equally valued, irrespective of the school they are part of now. This plan will consider not only the logistics of bringing year groups together but other elements such as the school's new name, new uniform and transport to the new site.

### What's next?

After half term a new stage in the process begins - the consultation stage. On the 8th June the Council's Cabinet will decide on the detailed proposals to be consulted upon. Essentially this is likely to give details of:

1. **A Transition Plan:** this will be a proposal for the physical bringing together of Hookergate and Ryton students into one single new school with a new identity as Hookergate moves towards closure.
2. **A preferred site or sites for the new school.**

After the Council's Cabinet meeting a range of events across the West of the Borough will be organised to allow full and open public consultation on the proposals. It is already planned to have a range of people present at the events

including Senior Council Officers, Headteachers, Senior School Staff and Governors to be available to answer the questions that parent/carers, students and others need to be answered. We need you to hear about the plans and have your say. Many of you helped shape this project when you shared your views last summer, please come and help this summer. Public consultation will begin on the **14th June** and last for six weeks.

Following the period of consultation the Council's Cabinet will make final decisions in September 2010.