

## Introduction

Over the last few years the Bromley Education Business Partnership has encouraged and supported schools and local businesses to work together to enhance the curriculum. To further these developments in primary schools an EBP residential course was organised and run by Bromley's Education Training and Support Division. Participating schools were encouraged to send small teams of teachers in order that there could be effective project planning both during and after the course.

This article

- describes how business links, in their widest sense, can add a unique realism to design and technology activities, and at the same time help meet the requirements of the revised Order
- outlines the whole-school approach
- describes a project developed with a Year 4 class.

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With an introduction  
by Richard Green,  
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Hawes Down Junior School has two classes per year group and a Special Opportunities Unit. The children from that class are regularly integrated with the main school and did so for this particular project.

Every year, during the spring term, we have a week when the normal timetable is suspended and the whole school concentrates on a particular aspect of the curriculum. We try to include visits for the children during the week to stimulate their interest. It is an opportunity for staff to concentrate their energy on one area free from other demands. The week culminates in an assembly where the children share their work and the whole school celebrates the success of the week. This year, the curriculum area was design and technology. As subject coordinator, I had attended a DFE 20-day course and this had resulted in some additional school-based INSET. Curriculum Week was the chance for us to try out some of our ideas and was also an opportunity to work on design and technology in a block rather than in short weekly sessions. However, when planning I felt that the week still needed some 'sparkle' to really fire our enthusiasm.

It was at this point that, together with a colleague, I attended the residential course run by Bromley EBP. We took part in workshops that increased our understanding of the benefits of schools and businesses working together. We also had time to plan work using the resources and professional expertise available to us, and we came up with the idea of linking all eight classes to a business for the week.

On our return to school our plans were quickly agreed. This meant that the EBP field officer had to work very hard to arrange one-day teacher placements at short notice. Five teachers were able to spend the day at their business link prior to taking the children during Curriculum Week.

## Business links

One Year 3 class linked with the Pavilion Leisure Centre and investigated the types of toys used in the crèche, as well as looking at the other leisure facilities in the centre. Their outcomes from the week included

Some Year 4 pupils  
focused on store design  
and layout after a visit to  
a Waitrose supermarket





models of toys and water slides made from corriflute and reclaimed materials. The other Year 3 class linked with the local McDonald's. Following this visit, the children analysed the layout of the restaurant and used their information to help them in designing their own burger bar. They also designed the logo for their restaurant, and incorporated it into 'Happy Meal' containers, chip boxes and hats which they designed and made.

Year 4 classes worked with Crystal Palace Football Club and a Waitrose supermarket. The latter visit gave them a wonderful insight into what is involved in running a large supermarket, and the work back in school focused mainly on product packaging and store design and layout.

Year 5 classes linked with The Body Shop and the local Environmental Education Service. Following the Body Shop visit, the children designed and made bath products and lotions using natural products, T-shirts with 'green' messages and floating soap dishes. The other class developed activities based around the recycling of materials, such as making jewellery from waste materials, adapting recipes for bread pudding, and imaginative street litter bins.

Year 6 classes worked with Air Viceroy Travel Agents and our local Shaftesbury Society School, Nash House. Using the school journey as a theme, the travel agent link resulted in a window display and brochures advertising the Isle of Wight. The children had to measure the space available in the window and design, make and eventually put up the display. The outcomes of the school link were multimedia nature trails for disabled children. The children investigated the flora and fauna in the gardens and then produced sound guides, touch guides and large-print information boards.

#### Crystal Palace kit

My Year 4 class of 30 children linked with Crystal Palace Football Club. The school already had contact with the club through their 'Crystal Palace in the Community' coaching scheme. It therefore seemed a good idea to further extend this contact and



to link it to the design and manufacture of a new style shirt, and for each child to design and make a shirt for their teddy.

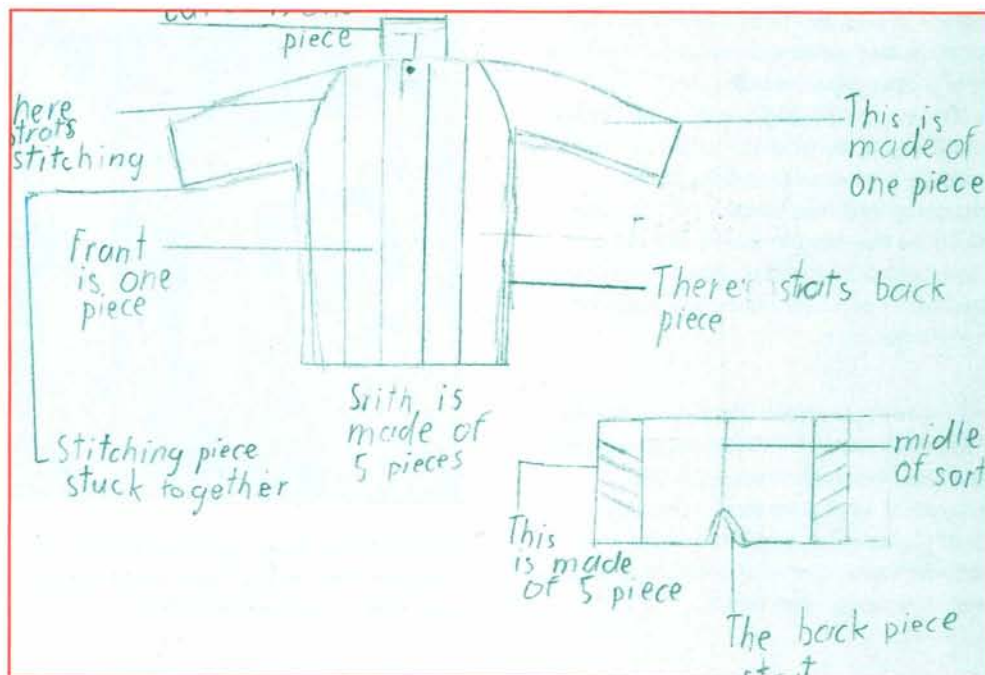
*After visiting The Body Shop Year 5 classes produced 'green' T-shirts*

I spent a day at the Mitcham Training Ground with the kit manager. Initially I felt quite nervous in such a male environment but was quickly put at ease by Vic. He introduced me to the players and coaching staff. Vic was really helpful and friendly and I was able to find out a lot about his working

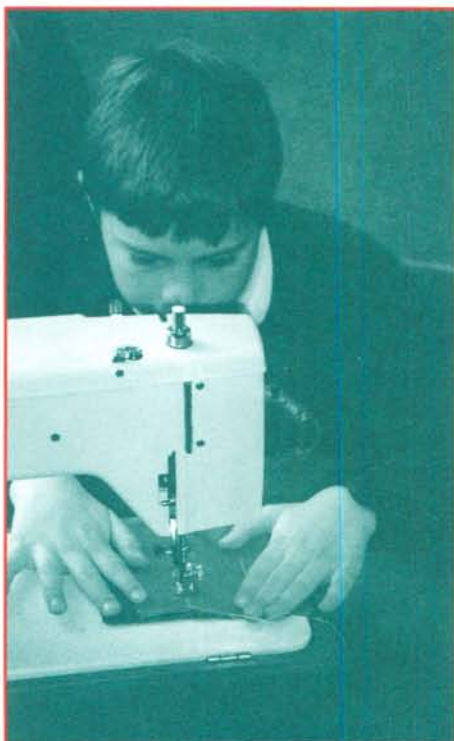
*Some of the designs for Crystal Palace kit*







*Sewing fabric samples was just one of the focused practical tasks required by the Crystal Palace assignment*



week. The day was very much hands-on and I helped to pack the kits, towels and tracksuits for the next day's match. In addition to this I chatted to the ladies in the laundry room while sorting dirty kit and smelly socks ready for the washing machine.

Vic was also interested in my job and by the end of the day was quite receptive to the

idea of my class coming to the ground. They would be shown around the training facilities and could watch the team practise. The children would also be able to show the players their designs and get some consumer feedback. I am sure that if I had just made a call to the training ground requesting this kind of access, I would have been politely turned down. When planning the work for the children I was keen to incorporate the three types of activity as set out in National Curriculum requirements for Design and Technology. I also wanted them to have the opportunity to work both in small groups and

individually. Prior to the visit, the classroom was rearranged into different work areas and the children grouped into five groups of six pupils. Each group had the name of a Crystal Palace player and they had a folder to keep their work in.

#### Investigating and evaluating

The class brought in football kits and magazines from home. There was class and then group discussion of different styles used in club kits. Using their reference material, the children drew simplified sketches of football shirts, ignoring club and sponsor logos. Their brief was to focus on use of colour (blocks, stripes, patterns, etc.) and collar style (e.g. v-neck, round, collar, lace-up).

This activity provided the children with the opportunity to explore existing products and helped them to generate ideas when designing new kit for the Crystal Palace team.

#### Designing

Next, the children produced a range of designs using the club colours of red and blue. Each child drew his or her favourite design on a larger scale and put it in the group folder. The groups then compiled a short questionnaire for the visit to the training ground.



### The visit

Unfortunately the weather was really against us - a mixture of freezing sleet and snow. Vic welcomed us and showed us around as promised. He was able to answer some of the children's questions about the kit preferences of individual players - long or short sleeves, T-shirts underneath or not, size of shirts, for example. We watched the team train for a while but they were unable to stop and talk to us as their muscles would have seized up in the cold. This was very disappointing for the children, but the 'thank you' letters they later wrote to the club suggested that many were content at having just touched their heroes' boots.

### Disassembling

That afternoon I cut an old football shirt apart at the seams as a whole-class demonstration. Looking at the flattened out pieces was quite a surprise for many of the children. Each group looked at a kit with a view to analysing the shapes involved. Individually, they drew what they thought the pattern pieces were like and annotated these diagrams.

### Focused practical tasks

The next couple of days involved the children in activities that would enable them to make their teddy shirts. These were:

- making a paper pattern
- sewing fabric samples by hand
- sewing fabric samples by machine
- use of fabric bonding web
- use of stick-on Velcro.

Each task was accompanied with brief note-taking.

### Making

Next came the construction of the teddies' vests. The shirts had mainly become vests at the paper pattern stage because sleeves proved too much of a problem for most of the children. Time was fast running out, so the class voted for their favourite design. One group worked at an incredible pace to get a prototype shirt constructed. They only left the cuffs and setting-in of long sleeves to me.



*Teddies model the chosen designs*

organising a return visit to Crystal

Palace FC to get the players' evaluation of the children's designs and of the prototype shirt. The week itself was great fun and there was a very hardworking atmosphere at all times. However, I was overambitious about what could be managed in a week. It had seemed like a long time at the planning stage but it positively flew by, and the making stage needed more time. I also felt that the children were limited by the fabric that was on offer - just plain red and blue polyester silk. Perhaps a range of striped, printed, patterned, heavy and lightweight fabrics should have been available. But, as ever, there was a financial constraint involved.

Finally, if I were to repeat the project, I would encourage the children to record more of their thoughts as they worked. These factors meant that it was difficult to make a full assessment of their design and technology capability, but all valuable learning points for my future teaching of the subject. At a whole-school level, the week was a real success. Although tired, the staff felt that they had the chance to really get to grips with design and technology and the business links meant that they had the opportunity to work with adults outside the school community as well as raising the local profile of the school. The children were made aware of different jobs in the local community, and were particularly motivated as they were designing and making for a real purpose. This undoubtedly raised the quality of their work. I am sure we will all look forward to developing these links in the future.