Exploring the Role of Design Quality in the Building Schools for the Future Programme

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Abstract
The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme represents the biggest single UK government investment in school buildings for more than 50 years. A key goal for BSF is to ensure that pupils learn in 21st-century facilities that are designed or redesigned to allow for educational transformation. This represents a major challenge to those involved in the design of schools. The paper explores the conceptualizations of design quality within the BSF programme. It draws on content analysis of influential reports on design published between 2000 and 2007 and interviews with key actors in the provision of schools. The means by which design quality has become defined and given importance within the programme through official documents is described and compared with the multiple understandings of design quality among key stakeholders.

The findings portray the many challenges that practitioners face when operationalizing design quality in practice. The paper concludes with reflections on the inconsistencies between how design quality has been appropriated in the BSF programme and how it is interpreted and adopted in practice.