

Procuring the Work Externally

Having considered the issues above, it is likely that a number of projects will be procured from external contractors.

Each scheme will need to be specified and put out to quotation or tender (depending upon its value and local financial regulations).

Specifications must be clear and comprehensive – contractors will price only for that which is in the specification. Use of a specialist is advisable for all but the most straightforward of schemes.

Remember: Specifications – contractors will price only for the items detailed in the specification. Any additional work, requested after the contract has been let, is likely to be charged at a premium.

Key Components of a Good Specification

Form of Contract	For smaller schemes, this is likely simply to be an official school order
Specify who is to be the 'Employer'	Generally the school
Scope the Works	Provide a detailed account of what is required. Specify recognised standards wherever possible, eg British Standard (remember the school's carbon footprint – can it be reduced?)
Record Drawings	Provide annotated drawings to support the written information and provide greater clarity
Access Arrangements	Provide a contact name and number to allow prospective contractors to view the area of the proposed work
Contract Administrator	Provide the name of the school contact who will be acting as Contract Administrator
Commencement and Completion	Specify start and completion dates
Programme	Indicate when an order is likely to be placed with the successful contractor and when you will expect the contractor to provide you with a written programme of works
Health and Safety	Refer to the relevant legislation: eg 'The contractor shall comply at all times with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act and any other Acts, Regulations or orders in respect of the Health and Safety of employees.' Specify that the contractor is required to provide the Employer with a copy of its Health and Safety Policy. Identify any specific health and safety matters that may affect working practices (eg time limits for delivery of materials to avoid school breaks) (See <i>resource locator for publications relating to this H&S</i>)
Construction (Design and Management Regulations)	If CDM regulations apply, the pre-tender Health and Safety Plan must be issued with the tender specification (See <i>resource locator for publications relating to this topic</i>)
Security	Reinforce the responsibilities of the contractor to take adequate measures to ensure security of the premises
Materials and Workmanship	Include specific detail

Selection of Contractors

There are a number of ways in which a list of potential contractors to be invited to price for a project may be compiled:

- Direct contact (telephone directory, internet)
- Local knowledge
- LA 'approved' list
- Inviting expressions of interest through advertising in press and trade journals (for larger value schemes)

The following points should be considered when selecting contractors for work in schools:

- Carry out financial, technical and health and safety checks on the contractors. LAs often carry out such checks and hold an 'approved list' which may be accessible to schools
- Ensure appropriate insurance cover – the guide for Public Liability Insurance level is now £5 million
- Consider the use of public databases holding lists of contractors – but be cautious about the specific checks that have been carried out by the database holder. You may need to carry out supplementary checks
- Select contractors who are registered with a federation or standards/inspection body
- Always seek references
- Use contractors appropriate for the type of work, eg painters for redecorations, rather than general building contractors
- Appoint contractors in writing, being clear about the precise terms of their commission/contract

Remember: Careful contractor selection will help to avoid costly and time-consuming problems later.

7: Legal Guidance in Relation to School Premises

This section aims to provide practical, non-technical guidance on the whole range of legislation relevant to the management of school premises. The following tables identify the key pieces of legislation and provide a broad synopsis.

(See resource locator for HSE publications relating to these topics)

Legislation	Synopsis
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	This is the over-riding piece of health and safety legislation. It covers all activities and tasks that may be carried out within schools and as part of school life. It places duties upon all those that have cause to enter premises, including employers, employees, visitors, contractors, etc. The regulations within this Act are very general and all-encompassing. All other legislation is born out of this Act.
The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999	This is much more specific and lays down detailed duties such as risk assessments, health surveillance, capabilities and training. It looks very much at the people side of health and safety.
The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992	These regulations cover aspects of ventilation, temperature, lighting, cleanliness, room dimensions, workstations, traffic routes, glazing, drinking water and rest areas. As indicated in the title of the regulations, they focus on minimum requirements for the workplace.
The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) 2002	This looks specifically at hazardous substances and how they should be stored, used within a school building, what control measures should be in place when handling these chemicals, and what should happen if any spillages occur, etc. This also includes substances used by contractors. There is a requirement to carry out COSHH assessments so that all chemicals used or brought onto the site are properly controlled.
The Manual Handling Operation Regulations 1992	This piece of legislation looks at the transporting, moving or supporting of loads by hand or bodily force. It lays out the need to risk assess those people who need to move loads and outlines the training those people should have.
Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995	This piece of legislation outlines the legal duties of an employer, a person who is self-employed, or someone in control of work premises to report and record some work-related accidents by the quickest means possible.
The Noise at Work Regulations 2005	This piece of legislation outlines maximum noise levels within the working environment and how noise and its effects can be controlled. Noise in the workplace also means noise created by others, eg contractors, that have an effect on your workplace and its activities.

8: Implementing a Minor Building Project: a Step-by-Step Guide

Having identified, through the AMP and SIP/SDP process, a specific project to be implemented, the following stages will need to be progressed:

Step 1

Identify a Client Team within the school. In order to ensure clear lines of communication, it is essential to identify one key member of staff through whom all communication should be channelled throughout the life of the project implementation. The client team will be responsible for formulating a written account of the requirements of the project (the brief). The team may include a member of staff from the faculty or area affected, the member of SLT responsible for the curriculum, the business manager, the site manager, chair of governors for premises/asset management committee. If the headteacher is not part of the team, they should be included in the circulation of minutes etc.

Step 2

The client team will **write the brief**, which should state the functional requirements of the proposed project, the timescale and the budget available. In short, the client brief will state **WHAT** is required and **WHEN**. Although the Government has currently decided against specifically requiring a focus on energy saving in any new build, there are plans for all schools' energy usage to become public knowledge. Equally the Sustainable Schools initiative and global warning both point to best practice involving the installation of energy and water saving constructions. However, there are tensions between the high cost of energy saving installations and managing tight capital budgets.

Step 3

The client will then need to **appoint professional support** (the design team), who will be responsible for advising on how the project (described in the brief) can be achieved.

Case Study

A school in its third year of a capital building project financed and managed by the LA was informed that costs had escalated and the initial plans for the next phase would need to be changed as a cost saving process. The LA officers made a presentation to the governors and SLT, emphasising the need to progress the work quickly in order to secure the funding. After the presentation, a number of the governors and SLT were unhappy with the proposals. An extra-ordinary meeting for the governors was arranged. The costings of some of the elements of the new proposals seemed wildly out of kilter and the outcomes were not what the school had visioned.

It was agreed to turn down the new proposals and to request the LA revisit the initial vision and proposals and to rework their proposals in-line with the original specification.

Whilst the LA was unhappy at the hold up and the school's lack of cooperation, they endeavoured meet the requirements and managed to provide acceptable plans for the phase, within budget.

Don't let the LA to pressurise the school into making hasty decisions!