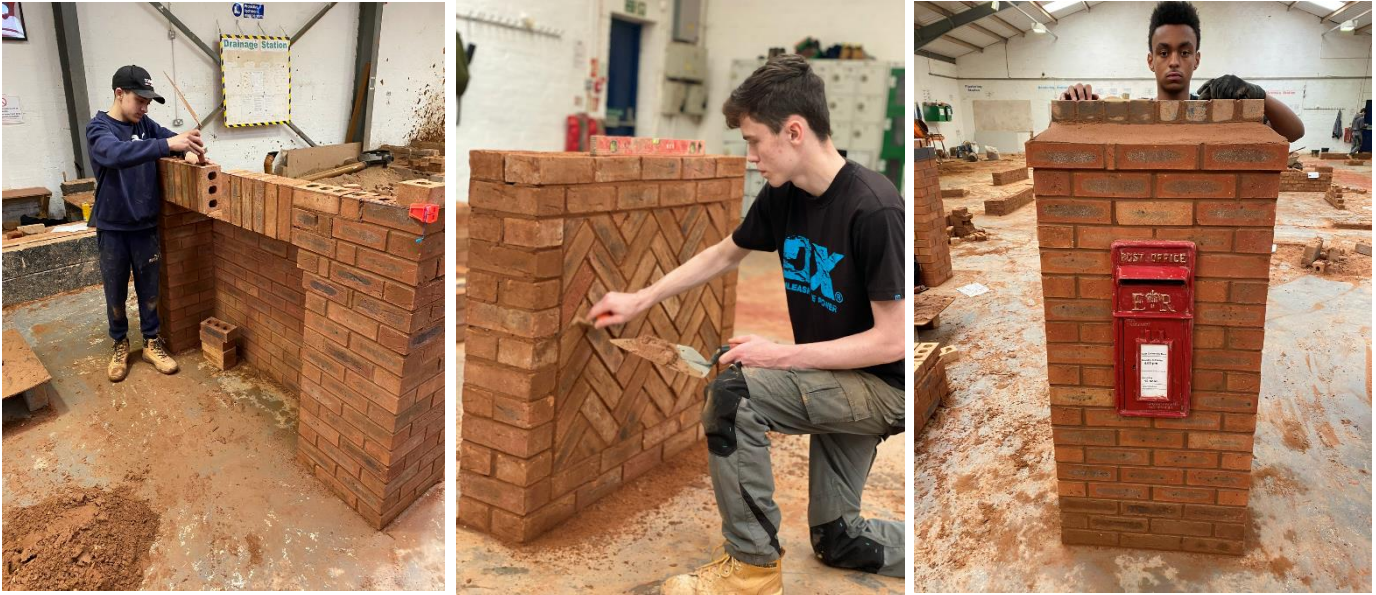


The Edge Academy and Solid Skills Learning Create a New Working Partnership for Vocational Learning Opportunities



The Edge Academy is excited to announce its new formal partnership with Solid Skills Learning, a leading, vocational, alternative training provider in South Birmingham that specialises in construction.

The two providers have operated on an informal basis on separate sites in Northfield and Longbridge for nearly 10 years. Whilst having previously worked closely, the two providers have now been able to secure shared facilities and learning spaces within the Edge Academy building.

The redevelopment of school space along with the redeployment of resources has allowed Solid Skills Learning to relocate from its previous Longbridge site to be part of the wider Edge Academy team. Whilst operating as its own independent provider, but utilising the shared facilities and training opportunities at the Edge Academy, this move will expand the opportunities for a greater number of the young people of South Birmingham and its secondary schools.

The construction-based provider offers learners tasters in four vocational areas: bricklaying, carpentry, plastering, rendering. Suitable progression routes for Year 11 learners are looked at as Solid Skills continuously prepares Year 11 learners for their eventual exit into Post-16 learning and apprenticeships. This partnership will allow for both the students of the Edge to gain valuable vocational experiences and qualifications within their curriculum, whilst also allowing local mainstream schools to refer students, who are at risk or have been permanently excluded, directly to Solid Skills Learning.

The school Principal, Adam Smith, said: "The opportunity to expand our curriculum offer for the young people we serve on roll at The Edge, whilst also increasing the opportunities for other students in the wider community, is exactly what the Edge exists for. The chance to work closely and in partnership with Dean and the team is a perfect match. We know we are stronger as a school for working with Solid Skills and recognise that Solid Skills can be even stronger for working with ourselves at The Edge."

Dean West, Manager, said "For Solid Skills, the chance to 'co-exist' with The Edge Academy, will undoubtedly provide many young people with exciting new opportunities and enhanced Post-16 decisions. This will give learners the confidence and experience to progress smoothly. We, at Solid Skills are highly confident that this partnership will grow to a school like none before. We share a common view that we will be stronger together."