

Press release

12 February 2004

PM Opens Capital City Academy

The Prime Minister Tony Blair officially opened the Foster and Partners designed Capital City Academy in Brent and launched the governments major new education initiative, Building Schools for the Future. This Academy provides an apt setting to introduce a program that outlines a radical new ambition to rebuild or refurbish every school in England, transforming secondary school education.

Sponsored by Sir Frank Lowe, Capital City Academy is one of the first City Academies that use strategic capital investment to deliver state of the art classroom facilities to support innovative teaching styles. The Academies are jointly supported by the Government and entrepreneurial sponsors from the commercial sector, and offer a new type of secondary school for the 21st century.

Frank Thomas, Principal at the Academy said:

The building is exciting and innovative and offers an extraordinary opportunity for the staff and students of Capital City Academy. For the teachers it represents what is likely to be a once in a lifetime chance to educate young people of the 21st Century in an environment which is truly of the 21st Century.

He also added:

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The change for students which the Academy represents has been wonderful to witness. It has shown in their pride and self esteem which has grown immeasurably. The better students feel about themselves the better they approach their study. Attitudes have changed and aspirations have increased, and already we are anticipating an improvement in the performance of all students.

The Foster design of this Academy directly promotes these ambitions. A central spine organises the building, forming a spacious internal street that runs through the centre of the school to allow visual connections and interaction in a stable and safe environment. The concern for transparency and openness was paramount, with classrooms that are larger and taller than usual with partially glazed walls, which provide natural lighting and visual links between classrooms and departments, and natural cross-ventilation to the exterior.

The Academy has been designed to provide flexible learning opportunities and can be reconfigured as teaching and learning practices evolve in the future. Restaurant facilities are located at the heart of the building to encourage social interaction. A generous full-length colonnade embraces the sports field and relates the building to the surrounding landscape.

City Academies are a part of the community and this academy has a range of facilities, including a theatre, sports hall, library and computer rooms, which are openly available to the public for after-hours use. The building assumes a local scale and is orientated to create a new public route, which allows the public access to the whole site.

Note to Editors

- GCSE mock exams in January predict that results in Summer 2004 will show a 100% improvement in the number of students achieving 5 or more A

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to C GCSEs.

- The high quality facilities at the 11-18 Academy are proving so popular that it is already 43% over-subscribed for next year.
- There continues to be a high percentage of children with English as an Additional Language, 37% are eligible for free school meals, and 33% have special needs.
- The average class size is 24/25.
- The ratio of computers to students is 1:4

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