

Hope Academy

Newton-le-Willows

Transforming education for our young people

The joint Catholic and Church of England Academy to replace Newton Community High School & St Aelred's Catholic Technology College.

A welcome from our new Principal - John Gannon.

John Gannon is the Principal Designate of Hope Academy. John comes to this important post having had extensive experience in a range of senior leadership positions in Catholic education. For the past twelve years, John has been Headteacher of Christ the King Catholic High, a high performing school specialising in Technology and Leadership Development. John is also an experienced consultant, having worked for the National College of School Leadership on a range of programmes including Strategic Leadership in ICT, Building Schools for the Future Leadership programme and, more recently, a coach for Local Leaders in Education Programme.



It is with great pleasure and sense of privilege that I introduce myself as the Principal Designate of Hope Academy. Since becoming involved in the development of Hope Academy I have been struck by the energy, commitment and enthusiasm of those people engaged in making this exciting venture a reality.

I recently spent an excellent afternoon with the new Year 7 pupils from both St Aelred's and Newton Community High at the site of the new building. I observed first-hand the excitement and engagement of pupils from both schools and the easy co-operation and professionalism of teaching staff and specialist staff from Willmott Dixon who organised an outstanding day.

I believe the creation of Hope Academy represents one of those rare moments where inspirational vision and opportunity have come together to create something that will be truly special.

The exciting vision and creation of Hope Academy is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the parishes and community in the area to build something unique and transformational for the benefit of

its young people and local community now and in the future.

My own educational philosophy is informed by my Christian beliefs and background, and central to this is a commitment to the equality and dignity of young people irrespective of their ability, needs or life experience.

I have for many years worked in Christian educating communities and have always been committed to achieving excellence and high standards in all that is done.

I believe these characteristics, coupled with high expectations, are vital ingredients for a successful school both in terms of the academic achievement and good behaviour of pupils. However, it is important to recognise that these concerns must be balanced by equal emphasis towards the care and happiness of our young people.

I have heard it stated that our education system spent the twentieth century perfecting nineteenth century models of education. Today there is an urgent realisation that our schools need to change. Schools must transform if we are to properly prepare our children for the world they will live in. As a Christian educating

community Hope Academy will be committed to offering innovative and highly effective approaches to education balanced against the continuity of our rich Christian heritage.

Our inclusive approach offered to all young people in the area will create a community centred on young people as learners that is committed to meeting their individual needs. Our Christian context and values will underpin all that we do, creating a community where spiritual development is a priority and where we live out the values of the Gospel.

My academic background is in Chemistry and Environmental Sciences. As a teacher I have been struck over a number of years by the concern and worry young people express over the future of our planet.

I feel it highly relevant to the concerns and issues of young people that the Academy's specialism is to be 'Sustainability'.

At the heart of this idea is a moral issue that reflects the responsibility we all have for sustaining a viable future and will look to explore ways in which we can meet our needs today without compromising the quality of life for future generations.

I am now busy preparing the first prospectus for the Academy and taking the time to speak to parents and I look forward to dedicating myself full-time in September and to play my part in creating a learning community that will transform the lives of our young people.



Faithfully,
John Gannon, Principal

The Academy's first prospectus will be available on our website from the end of July.

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Academy Update

As the building works for Hope Academy continue to develop so too do the plans about what will be happening when the Academy opens.

Logo Design

The new Academy logo design is nearing completion and is soon to be unveiled on displays in both the schools before being launched on the website.

It has been designed with input from pupils at St Aelred's and Newton Community High School as well as some of the feeder primary schools. Pupils attended a number of workshops where they were given an insight into the world of brand identity design and asked for their suggestions and ideas on what the logo design should represent and look like.

Pupils have also been able to submit their own design ideas electronically with the website. All the suggestions were fed into the design process and the Academy's Project Steering Group were presented with eight design options for consideration. One concept was chosen and this is being refined by the designers, PalfreyGreer.

Prospectus

PalfreyGreer are also working with the Principal Designate, John Gannon, on the design and production of the Academy's first prospectus.

The prospectus, which will highlight more about the curriculum and support structures of the Academy, will be available to view in electronic format by the end of July 2010 and hard copies will be available by the middle of August 2010.

Uniforms

Uniform providers are being invited to tender shortly for the supply of the new Academy uniform.

At the same time, PalfreyGreer, are developing the designs for the uniforms. It is intended that sessions will be held with pupils and staff, to canvas their views on the proposals in early September. The final designs will be unveiled at the 12 month countdown event which is to be held in late September.

Branded items of the uniform to the value of £60 will be provided for those existing pupils in Y7 to Y10 transferring to the Academy in September 2011.



Already the Principal has outlined a commitment to delivering one-on-one provision of computers to Y7 and to support virtual learning environments. Pupils will be able to remotely access the online resources they need 24hrs per day, 7 days per week.

Pupils at Hope Academy will be placed in tutor/family groups of around 23 pupils, offering excellent pupil/teacher ratios and care for pupils.

What will the new Academy feature?

There will be a number of state of the art facilities including:

- Science laboratories
- Activity studios
- Professional recording and dance studios
- Biodiversity lake
- Outdoor classrooms
- Hope Garden and outdoor amphitheatre

These will all contribute to making Hope Academy truly different. It will deliver 21st Century learning which is modern and forward looking, preparing pupils for their futures and will be an exciting and innovative education facility for the pupils of St Helens.

Top: Outdoor classroom

Bottom: Hope Garden



Build Update

The team at Willmott Dixon has been keeping to schedule on the build of the new Academy demonstrated in the progress pictures here. Even the heavy snows in January couldn't halt the progress! Roll on September 2011.



October 2009



January 2010



May 2010



March 2010



April 2010



Faith Space

A piece of inspirational artwork has been created that will be installed at the main entrance to the Academy. As well as a welcoming statement, it will also give a strong sense of identity to the 'Faith Space'.

The artwork has been inspired by the word 'Hope' which encompasses all of the positive ideas the Academy is aiming to achieve. The inspiration for the design was the Hope Garden which will be planted directly outside the Faith Space. The design for the window reflects the colours and patterns of the plants that will be growing there. The colour palette for the stained glass reflects the blues and greens of the flowers and plants, and the patterns are taken from the shapes created by the stems and branches of the trees, bushes and grass. Throughout the year the window will represent a rich and lush landscape full of colour, growth and hope.

The artwork will be fabricated in stained glass and integrated into the glazing for the window.

The work has been created by architectural glass artist Kate Maestri, who has recently worked on a number of projects including a curved stained glass balustrade running 100 metres through the main concourse of Foster and Partners' new music centre, The Sage, Gateshead; exterior illuminated glass benches for the Open University Business School; and a series of stained glass windows for the new chapel at Barnet Hospital.



Assembly Presentations

Willmott Dixon recently conducted a number of presentations to students at St Aelred's and Newton Community High School morning assemblies to talk to the students about the new Academy.

The students were given an insight into the design and sustainability elements together with the 'Schools within Schools' aspect of the project.

Mrs M Ludden, Senior Deputy Head Teacher at St Aelred's said: "The Assemblies certainly whetted the appetite and pupils responded very positively to the wealth of information they received" Mrs Ludden extended her thanks to the Willmott Dixon team, by presenting each member with a certificate of appreciation for the preparation and delivery.

Top: Chris Jones, Senior Quantity Surveyor, Willmott Dixon, addressing the students and teachers at Newton. **Middle:** Gavin Gomersall, Head Teacher of Newton Community High School thanks Chris and the team for the presentation.

Bottom: Maureen Ludden, Senior Deputy Head at St Aelred's is pictured with one of the tutors.



Ethos & Environment Day

One hundred and eighty Year 6 pupils from our feeder Primaries attended an 'Ethos and Environment' induction day on Thursday 15th April.

The day started at St. Aelred's with a 'getting to know you' activity. All pupils then 'walked' up to the Newton Community High School site accompanied by staff. On arrival, the pupils engaged in an activity with the Year 6 pupils from Newton Community High School's feeder schools, based on the theme 'the Sustainable Academy'.

A prize draw was held and Mr John Gannon (Hope Academy Principal) and Mr Simon Butcher (Willmott Dixon) presented the prizes.



Students walking around the perimeter of the site.



Participating in the activities workshop.

Maths in Construction

Willmott Dixon has been working with Julie Birch, HLTA Maths at Newton Community High School, on integrating some of the construction work into pupils' maths curriculum.

The first of four projects, which have been designed with close co-operation between Julie Birch, Alistair Brymer (Construction Manager), Marie Dobosz (Site Administrator), Shaun Bretland (Quantity Surveyor) all of Willmott Dixon and Paul Haigh (Project Architect) of Robinson Architects, was on Surface Water Drainage and Maximum Water Flow.

The pupils used live drawings and data from the site offices to gain an understanding of using Maths in the construction industry.

The project is for Year 8 students who, when the Academy opens, will enter at Key Stage 4 to take their GCSE examinations.



Top: Shaun Bretland (foreground), Julie Birch (back centre) and Paul Haigh (back right) with students working on the first project.

Next Issue – Logo and uniform designs unveiled.

If you have a comment or question, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

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