

Excelsior News

The Excelsior Academy Newsletter

Issue 1 – January 2007

www.excelsiornewcastle.org.uk

Academy Moves Ahead



By IRVINE LAIDLAW, sponsor of Excelsior Academy Newcastle.

This is a very exciting time for everyone involved in the academy.

After months of planning the building work has now begun at Norland Road. We also have our executive principal, Mrs Phil Marshall, who will join us full-time from April.

Work is underway on the curriculum for the academy and the transition arrangements for staff and students who will move over from West Gate Community College.

Through future editions of this newsletter we will keep you up to date on what's happening, and we hope that if you have any questions, concerns or ideas you will contact us.

It has always been my intention that the academy should be central to the regeneration of the area, and I am, therefore, totally committed to involving local people in its development.

Irvine Laidlaw

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Excelsior Wins Academy Name Vote



Members of West Gate Community College school council with Hari Shukla, Irvine Laidlaw and Councillor Nick Cott.

The name for the new academy for Newcastle was decided in a vote by the students, staff, parents and governors at West Gate Community College and its 10 local primary schools.

The new name Excelsior Academy Newcastle - put forward by the school council at West Gate Community College - came out top against the previous working name for the academy, West First.

Irvine Laidlaw, academy sponsor said: "I know the school council put a lot of thought into their name and I am pleased that local people have voted for it too.

"We asked the students to come up with a name that represents what the academy is about – creating opportunities for local children to fulfil their potential and achieve their best, equipping them with the skills and self-confidence to achieve their goals. Excelsior does that very well."

Councillor Nick Cott, executive member for children and young people at Newcastle City Council, said: "The choosing of the name for the academy is important in defining a local identity for the school in an exciting time of investment and regeneration.

"It will remind everyone that the academy is being set up to enable more young people in the West End to get the best start in life and gain the qualifications and skills they need to take them on to higher education, training and employment."

Executive Principal Appointed



Mrs Philomena Marshall will be the academy's executive principal. She takes up her new appointment in April 2007 to prepare for the opening of the academy in September 2008.

She is currently headteacher at Monkwearmouth School and

associate principal of St Peter's Sixth Form College in Sunderland, and was formerly headteacher at Sandhill View School in Sunderland.

Mrs Marshall, originally from Middlesbrough, qualified as a teacher in Newcastle then moved to London where she taught in a number of inner city schools. She came back to the North East in 1991 and held posts in schools in Chester le Street and Darlington before moving to Sunderland as head of Sandhill View in 1997.

She said: "I am looking forward to the challenges of this exciting new post at Excelsior. The creation of a new school and learning environment is a great opportunity for the whole community.

"Successful schools are dependent on excellent staff teams, supportive governors and parents and the contribution of all the young people that they serve.

"This is a very good opportunity to respond positively to the Every Child Matters agenda and create a learning environment around the needs of the community, not just for the present, but with the future very much in mind."

Irvine Laidlaw, academy sponsor, leads the trust which has been formed to run the academy. He said:

"We had a very high quality field of applications for the post of executive principal and we are delighted that someone of Phil Marshall's calibre and experience will lead Excelsior.

"She has a track record of raising attainment and achieving excellent results."

Excelsior Needs You!

A community working group has been set up to discuss community issues by the academy trust. It is chaired by Mr Hari Shukla.

It is one of four working groups – the other three are for design and construction, education and transition – which report to the main decision making group for the academy at this stage, the executive group.

The executive group is chaired by Irvine Laidlaw and also includes the executive principal, Mrs Phil Marshall, and representatives of the Department for Education and Skills and Newcastle City Council.



The academy building looking south across the river. Image by HLP/AWP.

The community working group looks at all community issues for the academy, and represents all the people who have a stake in the new school.

Mr Shukla said: "We'd be delighted to have some parent representatives on the group, from both the local primary schools and from parents of students currently at West Gate Community College who will transfer to the academy. We would also welcome representatives of residents from around the academy site."

If you would like more information about the community group please contact us.

Grand Design: Building Update



Aerial view of how the academy will look. All academy images are by architects and interior designers Howarth Litchfield Partnership.

Contractor SURGO Construction Limited has started work on site at Norland Road.

SURGO is the largest privately owned construction company in the North East with deep roots spanning 100 years in the Newcastle area based on the Newcastle Business Park, Scotswood Road.

SURGO has developed an enviable reputation for delivering education projects and Excelsior will be the company's fourth academy.

Architects for the development are Durham-based Howarth Litchfield Partnership and the landscape design is by Anthony Walker and Partners, based in Killingworth.

The academy has been designed to accommodate four 11-16 'schools within a school', each with a separate entrance and built around a central courtyard. There is also the sixth form wing with places for 300 students.

The academy site is on a slope so the building is tiered to take advantage of the views south across the river. Sports fields are on the upper half of the site and the building is on the lower half of the site. Vehicular access to the academy is via Denton Road with on site car parking, bus lay-by and dedicated drop-off facilities. The entrance from Broadmead Way will be for pedestrians and cyclists.



View of main entrance.



Corridor view.



Interior view of the main entrance area.

Logo Competition

Pupils in west Newcastle are to be asked to design the logo for Excelsior.

This will reflect what the academy stands for and will be used on all academy correspondence, the website and the uniform. The result will be announced in February and we'll have details in the next issue of this newsletter. Watch this space!

On the Internet



Our new website is being developed at www.excelsiornewcastle.org.uk

It will contain background information on the academy as well as news.

Contact Us

If you have any questions or comments about the academy please contact Alison Fowler or Sarah Farnsdale at MDA Communications on 01670 785 000, or e-mail info@excelsiornewcastle.org.uk.

Facts About Excelsior



- it will not be a faith school. Children from families of all faiths, and of none, will be equally welcome.
- it is being set up by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the sponsor, Irvine Laidlaw. Irvine Laidlaw is a philanthropist who believes children deserve the best in education.
- Irvine Laidlaw has provided over £2 million towards the setting up costs of the academy. Once open, the DfES pays the ongoing running costs.
- the academy will be inspected by OfSTED.
- it will be free and non-selective.
- it will have places for 1,800 students including sixth form facilities for 300.
- local children attending local primary schools will have priority for admission.
- students currently at West Gate Community College will transfer.

What Happens Next?



January 2007

Launch of academy logo competition.

First meetings of the Community Reference Group and the Education Reference Group.

April 2007

Mrs Marshall, the executive principal, moves into Excelsior Academy offices at Bridgewater School, Delaval Road, whilst the academy is being built.

May 2007

Recruitment of the four school principals begins.

January 2008

The four school principals and the business manager start full-time.

Summer 2008

West Gate Community College closes.

September 2008

Excelsior Academy Newcastle opens.