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Chelsea Academy



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Building the Chelsea Academy

In the face of a growing demand for secondary school places Kensington and Chelsea Council has finalised plans to build a new school – the Chelsea Academy – in the south of the borough.

Scheduled to open in 2009, the hard work that has gone in to providing this new facility is finally coming to fruition.

There are currently just four secondary schools in the borough,

serving 26 feeder primary schools.

During the last academic year there were more than 1,700 applications for 600 places at Royal Borough secondary schools, forcing over a thousand disappointed families to apply for school places in other London boroughs.

Just 44 per cent of students attending Royal Borough primary schools were given places in secondary schools in Kensington and Chelsea during the 2006 to 2007 academic year.

Just 25 per cent of children who attended primary schools in the south of the borough were able to stay within Kensington and Chelsea.

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Historical background

The Council has been campaigning for a new secondary school since the late 1980s but lack of space within the borough and the logistics of finding suitable partners slowed the process.

Plans gathered momentum with the formation of the Chelsea Academy Group – a partnership between the Council and the London Diocesan Board for Schools (representing the Church of England) with backing from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Eventually a site at Lots Road was chosen.

The task of designing the school was given to award winning architects Feilden Clegg Bradley.

The firm has a solid reputation for designing schools and public buildings – Building Design magazine selected the firm as ‘Best Education Architect of the Year’ in 2005 and 2006.

They came up with a design that incorporated modern, flexible teaching spaces and cutting-edge design.

The school will feature three distinct teaching blocks scaling down in height from a five storey building closest to Lots Road Power Station to a two storey building adjoining Upcerne Road.

Housing 810 pupils, aged 11 to 16 years old, plus a sixth form for 250 pupils, the Academy will have top of the range science laboratories, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, a hall with a theatre space and a restaurant.

Space restrictions on the site led to the architects opting for the solution of locating sports and social areas on different levels.

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Did you know?

- The first academies projects were announced in September 2000 – there are plans to establish



Kensington and Chelsea's Major Planning Development Committee granted detailed planning permission to build the Academy, which will specialise in sciences, on the 25 September 2007.

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What is an academy?

An academy is an all ability school established by sponsors from business, faith or voluntary groups working in partnership with central government and local education partners.

Much like other schools, they offer a broad and balanced curriculum to students of all abilities, focusing especially on one or more subject areas.

Though they are independent schools they are state funded so charge no fees and are under the control of governing bodies, which have clearly defined strategic roles in helping to shape their success.

This independent status allows them the flexibility to be innovative and creative with their curriculum, timetable, staffing and governance.

The admissions policy prioritises places for children who attend Royal Borough primary schools.

Half of all places will be community places and the remainder will be available as foundation places.

Community places will be available for children of families from any background or religion; foundation places will be available for children from families with a connection to any Christian faith.

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Funding the deal

The Academy will be built as part of the Government's Academies Programme.

This means the DCSF will provide most of the £38 million for building the school and will fund its future running costs.

The Council, along with the London Diocesan Board for Schools, will sponsor the venture – each will contribute £2 million towards the capital costs. The Council has also provided the land on which the school will be built.

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200 of them by 2010.

- There are currently 47 academies in England with 23 of them located in London.

Related Websites

- [Department for Education and Skills](#)
- [Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects LLP](#)
- [The Chelsea Academy](#)

Next steps

Building work will start soon but the school will open in temporary accommodation in 2009 with the new building set to open in September 2010.

A Principal was appointed last month who, over the coming year, will begin the task of recruiting staff and preparing for the Academy's first cohort of students.

The school will specialise in the sciences and have strong links with South Kensington's world famous science institutions.

Imperial College, for example, will be an important partner for the school placing post-doctoral students in the Academy to work alongside teachers to promote science teaching and learning.

For more information go to [New school for Chelsea](#)

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