



■ Forging ahead – headteacher Jean Alder on the construction site

Picture: STEVE O'CONNELL YRHZA05

Future is bright as college takes shape

A NEW £12million sixth form college is on target to open to students next year.

The Futures Upper College will be complete in April and the first intake of students will take place in September.

The 7,000sq metre college, in Southchurch Boulevard, Southend, is designed to broaden the opportunities for Southend youngsters aged over 16 with a range of vocational courses.

It will feature open-plan student spaces, spacious classrooms and modern furnishings and equipment. Students can study one and two-year courses in business studies, ICT and construction trades.

The college is intended to provide a bridge between school and work and will treat students as adults.

Students will be able to choose to spend breaks and non-class time either within the college or off-site.

The cafeteria, featuring wireless connection for laptops, will be open throughout the day, serving snacks and meals, and providing a meeting place for students and tutors.

Students will be supported throughout their time at the college, with a dedicated tutor.

Headteacher Jean Alder said: "I

“ We are looking forward to opening the new college building in the spring of next year

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am very excited about the new college. It will be great next term when we can start to get into the building. It will still take ages to fit out the building, but the first courses will start in September.

"It won't be either vocational or academic courses, but a bit of both. Youngsters can either do wholly vocational subjects or wholly academic subjects or a mix of both. Students these days

Exam-free alternatives on offer

THE college will offer one and two-year further education OCR national qualification courses in business studies and ICT.

These are an exam-free alternative to GCSEs, taking a more engaging, practical approach to learning and assessment.

On completion, the OCR qualifications allow students either to progress to employment or to higher education.

need the opportunity to study in a way that suits them.

"Employers need this kind of approach. It is recognised that should be provided with a range of opportunities for learning."

The college is working with Prospects, which has colleges in Southend and Basildon, providing a range of vocational courses.

Neil Bates, chief executive of the Prospects Learning Foundation Group, said: "The new upper college building is an important part of our vision to

transform the education and training opportunities for students.

"We are looking forward to opening the new college building in the spring of next year."

Phase two of the project will involve demolishing the old Thorpe Bay School buildings, on the same site, and replacing them with a lower college for 11 to 14-year-olds.

For information courses and for an application form, contact Chris Wicker on 01702 583224.

Additionally, in association with Prospects College, Futures will offer City and Guilds courses for students looking to enter the construction industry. The courses cover carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, and bricklaying.

The ICT and business studies courses both include the option to participate in the Careers Academy UK programme which

incorporates a paid six-week internship with a local business, one-to-one business mentoring, and lectures from experts.

Being part of the programme enables students to make connections with potential mentors, employers and colleagues in the business world, and provides students with great networking opportunities.



■ The future – what the college will look like

Picture: FRASER BROWN MacKENNA

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