

Future of Boys' Model set in stone



MLA Nigel Dodds, pupils Christopher McDowell and Graeme Greenwood, BELB Chief Executive David Cargo, BELB Chairperson Jim Rodgers, Belfast High Sheriff Margaret McKenzie, Former Head of the NI Civil Service Nigel Hamilton, Principal Jim Keith, Head Boy Aaron Biggerstaff, Jonathon Wells and Gareth Gordon and Chairperson of the Board of Governors Edwin McMurrin at the laying of the foundation stone at the Boys' Model

The Boys' Model became the fifth Belfast school to come under the BELB's strategic partnering agreement when the foundation stone for a new £30 million building was laid by former pupil and Head of the Civil Service, Nigel Hamilton.

Head Boy at the school in 1965, Mr Hamilton said he was "honoured" to return to his alma mater to mark the start of a new era for the school, one of five new schools currently being built by the BELB.

"This school has a tremendous reputation. Everywhere I go in the world I am proud to say that I am a former pupil of the Belfast Boys' Model," said Mr Hamilton.

"I have benefited from my time here, Belfast has benefited and Northern Ireland has benefited. It is an honour for me to be asked

to come back to mark this momentous occasion. It is what the school richly deserves."

The new school is part of the first phase a major strategic partnership between the BELB and AmeyFMP which will refurbish or rebuild many of the schools, libraries and youth clubs in Belfast to a value of up to £400 million.

The contract is an integral part of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland which sets out a long-term view of planned investment, approaching £20bn, over the next decade to improve the schools, roads, water, waste, health and office infrastructure.

Principal Jim Keith was delighted that work had finally started on the new school.

"I hope that the new school isn't just something that the pupils

and staff are proud of - it is something for the whole community to be proud of," he said.

"It will be a tremendous facility for the whole area and it can act as a catalyst for the wider community and become a hub of learning and activity before, during and after school hours."

The BELB signed a strategic partnership with AmeyFMP in March of this year which will see seven new schools built in Belfast by 2010. BELB Chairperson Jim Rodgers looked forward to a new era for schools in the city.

"There are exciting times ahead for education in Belfast. For the first time in the city's history there will be seven new schools being built at the same time," said Mr Rodgers.

"This is a day that some of

thought would never come and I would like to pay tribute to the hard work of the schools, board members and officers, who left no stone unturned to get the best possible education for the young people of Belfast.”

The other schools in the first phase of the BELB strategic partnership are Grosvenor Grammar School, Belfast Model School for Girls, Ashfield Girls’ School, Orangefield Primary School, Ravenscroft Nursery School and Glendhu Nursery School.



Head Boy 2008-09 Aaron Biggerstaff shares a joke with Nigel Hamilton, who was Head Boy from 1965-66, at the laying of the foundation stone