

Work has begun on state-of-the-art new school that is set to open next year

Work starts on new Amington school.

By **DAN NEWBOULD**
News Reporter

WORK has started on a brand new "state-of-the-art" school, all set to open in Tamworth as soon as next year.

Amington will welcome Garden Village Primary Academy in 2024 on the former Tamworth Golf Course in a project managed by Entrust.

Part of the Fierté Multi-Academy Trust, the school will serve the new housing development of 1,100 dwellings. It will welcome its first cohort of nursery and reception children next September, supporting up to 210 students from Reception through Year 6. There will also be a nursery with 26 places.

Maria Hamblin, CEO of the Fierté Multi-Academy Trust, said: "We cannot wait to welcome pupils to our brand new, state-of-the-art free school. The school will bring a real focus on providing an outstanding education so we can help every child soar."

"At the heart will be a commitment to fostering close connections with parents and the local community.

"This school will be a place where young minds will be encouraged and empowered throughout.

"The next few months will be busy. One of the most crucial decisions we have is who our new headteacher will be. We have no doubt we will have a very strong field to choose from - establishing a school

from scratch is something not many have chance to do.

"We will also be accepting applications from families who would like to send their child to the school over the coming months. We wholly appreciate selecting a school that has yet to be built can feel like a leap of faith, but we have all the ingredients to make this a brilliant school.

"We firmly believe in the power of unity. We are dedicated to inspiring all to achieve their utmost potential, and are looking forward to supporting children to thrive."

Local Amington councillor Martin Summers said: "I'm really glad to see work on the new school beginning, it was a requirement to provide one with the building of the new estate.

"With the number of families on the estate it will be such a relief for them, I'm sure, to know there is local school provision for their children. It will really help build the community there.

"It seems like quite a while ago it was presented at planning committee for us to comment on. I recall at the time there was a push to get parents to walk their children and they wouldn't provide a proper drop off point for parents taking their children to school by car.

"It's all very well and good trying to get those near the school to walk, but it doesn't help busy parents who need to drop their children there before work. They don't have time and it's unfair on them.

"They didn't even have a place for

coaches should they ever need them which we thought would be a good idea to incorporate for a school from scratch. Along with preventing traffic problems with there being no car drop off point.

"I totally understand the health agenda and if you can walk you should but if time is of the essence to get to work then it's not right and causes issues for the sake of it. I hope the county council reconsider."

Jonathan Price, Staffordshire County Council's cabinet member for education, said: "As towns grow and more housing is developed, it is important we plan ahead and ensure there are enough school places to meet demand.

"This school has been planned for a number of years, and it's good to see construction starting. I'm excited to see the school take shape and I'm sure local children are looking forward to learning in a new, state-of-the-art school.

"This school will serve children from local housing developments, so children will only have a short distance to travel.

"We don't provide pick-up and drop-off points, as we encourage more sustainable travel such as walking and cycling."

The school will also offer nursery, holiday, before and after school childcare services through Our Pride Our Joy, also run by the trust. Deadline for applications is January 15. For more visit gardenvillage.fierte.org.

Full stomach is key

KITCHEN capacity and cost issues could water down ambitions to deliver free school meals for all primary school children in Warwickshire.

A recommendation made by Dr Shade Agboola, Warwickshire's director of public health, as part of her annual report back in March was to "explore the feasibility" of a rolling out a county-wide programme "as research shows that children are able to learn better in school if they have a full stomach".

The statement was picked up at the latest meeting of the county's Health and Wellbeing Board by Councillor John Holland (Lab, Warwick West). At the hearing, Dr Agboola acknowledged "we might end up with just free breakfast clubs".

"The board was to come up with a feasible scheme," said Cllr Holland. "Obviously, it was needed by the start of the school year, which is now - has it been done?"

Councillor Margaret Bell (Con, Hartshill & Mancetter), chair of the board and the county's portfolio holder for adult social care and health, said work had got underway but there would be no quick fix: "While we are responsible for monitoring

recommendations of the public health report, some things are not within our power - indeed, schools do not come under this committee, although we have been active in looking at how it can be done.

"I know one of the schools in my area has been approached to set up a pilot.

"It is very complex, not straightforward and I'm not even talking about funding which is in itself an issue.

"There are issues about whether schools have the capability, the physical space to do some of the things we would like to see happen.

"This is not something you can wave a wand at and do overnight - it takes a lot of thought and certainly some piloting."

Dr Agboola added: "The recommendation was worded really carefully because we do have to understand some of the challenges inherent in providing free school meals for all primary school children.

"We will come up with some recommendations on what we can potentially do.

"Nothing is off the table - we might end up with just free breakfast clubs for all primary school children."

Pupils celebrating the opening of new school building

PUPILS are celebrating the opening of their brand-new school building which will "benefit children for generations to come".

Dosthill Primary Academy has replaced three mobile blocks with a modern single-story building consisting of six classrooms for year 5 and 6. Part of the Department for Education Priority School Building programme, designed to upgrade educational facilities across England, work for the new building was supported by the

creation of a temporary access road through the Broom. The temporary road will be removed and the area returned to its original form.

David Shakeshaft, executive headteacher, said: "Everyone at Dosthill Primary Academy is excited to see the opening of our new building.

"The new classrooms are fantastic and really reflect our school vision of "Inspiring All To Excellence".

"Our year 5 and 6 pupils are already making the most of their new learning spaces



and we'd like to thank the local community for their support while the building work took place.

"Together we have created a learning environment that will benefit children for generations to come."

Maria Hamblin, chief executive for the Fierté Multi-Academy Trust which Dosthill joined in 2018, said: "It's wonderful to see the pupils enjoying their new classrooms.

"The building project has been in development for years and we're delighted to continue to provide our pupils with inspiring learning environments."

Dosthill Primary Academy opens brand new school building.

