

New school is planned for next year in Beckton

It is one of 25 mooted across UK

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A new free school could open in Beckton next year, under proposals revealed this week. It is one of 25 such schools being planned for sites across England and Yorkshire Nationwide Schools. A site for the Beckton school, which would take children aged from four to 18, has yet to be identified. It would be run in partnership with Tollgate Road-based St Mary's Church, although it will not be a faith school. Yorkshire Nationwide Schools chief executive John Morahan said: "Our proposals are about certain criteria. "I hesitate to use the word 'fail', but if you look at performance data for the areas we are looking at you will find that a sizeable majority of local secondary schools are performing quite badly. "Beckton is an area that ticks the boxes for the kind of schools we intend to create, in areas where we need to raise the bar and let kids get a fair crack of the whip". He promised the proposed

school would recreate "grammar school standards", with a curriculum designed to ensure all children leave school with five good GCSE passes. The school would be non-selective and aim to draw as many children as possible from Beckton and other nearby areas.

Non-selective

The group is currently looking for local people to help gather evidence of demand and indicate whether they would be willing to send their children to the school if it opens. It is also looking for those interested in becoming trustees and governors, and to help them identify suitable premises. A series of public meetings will be held if there is sufficient interest. Free schools, which allow parents, teacher, charities and businesses to establish their own state-funded schools, are a flagship policy of the coalition government.

But critics, including the NUT, say they will divert money from existing schools, fuel social segregation and undermine local democracy.



■ The Anchor House football team with The UEFA Champions League Trophy

Residents at homeless charity get a sporting chance at lifting UEFA trophy

Homeless Richard Luiki has joined a select few by getting his hands on the UEFA Champions League Trophy.

Richard had his brush with glory as the highly prized cup was exhibited at Anchor House in Canning Town last week.

He said: "It is such an honour for us to have the chance to see it.

"When I became homeless and arrived at Anchor House I thought it was the worst thing that could have happened to me but now it looks like all my wishes are coming true."

The Anchor House homeless charity was given the honour of displaying the trophy after its volunteer Frank van Velzen applied to be

a custodian of the silverware.

The celebratory event to show off the cup was attended by schools and community members and featured football skills performances.

Anchor House residents like Richard have been helped in their rehabilitation through playing football.

Talking ways to avoid Olympic gridlock

Avoiding gridlock in east London when the Olympics kick off next year will be on the agenda at a transport summit.

More than 14,000 athletes, 20,000 journalists and a million spectators are expected to go to the 2012 Park in Stratford.

The Freight Transport Association will be discussing logistics on May 11 in the face of unprecedented road use.

Youngsters quiz capital's leaders

Youngsters from Rokeby and Little Ilford School joined fellow students when they quizzed London's leaders as part of a new youth engagement event.

They were taking part in EurVoice London, a new outreach event run by the European Youth Parliament United Kingdom. The event took them to Committee Room 14 of the Houses of Parliament on Friday.

Pupils from the two Newham schools travelled to Westminster to take part in what proved to be a thought-provoking and inspiring afternoon.

EurVoice London centred around a panel discussion, and pupils put questions to Jean Lambert (MEP, Green Party), Jonathan Scheele (Head of the EU Commission Representation in London), Rebecca Palmer (Mayor of London's Youth Engagement Team) and Phillip Souta (Director for Business for New Europe).

Among the topics discussed was the issue of rising youth unemployment, the levels of gun and knife crime in parts of London and the lack of political representation for under-18s.

The event gave the youngsters the chance to come together to share opinions with each other and with prominent figures.

You decide what goes on stage

Stratford's Theatre Royal is giving people the chance to decide what they want to see on stage for six months next year. From January to July 2012, issues at the theatre, in Gerry Raffles Square, will hand over control of its programme to the public. Locals will be given the opportunity to decide what they see in Open Stage. And a People's Choice has already been made over the theatre's Christmas panto. After 1,000 votes were counted Cinderella triumphed. Also winners were the pupils of Class 1 of Drew Primary

School, Silvertown, who were awarded free tickets for a group outing to see the panto.

The Open Stage journey began in September 2010 with the recruitment of a team of Connectors volunteers, who - led by Charlotte Handel, head of Open Stage - have been undertaking consultation with communities in their local areas. It is now moving online with the launch of www.openstage2012.com. This new website will give a national and international community an opportunity to engage and interact with the theatre.

Car blaze is investigated

A car set on fire in Canning Town has sparked an investigation.

The blaze, in Trinity Street, involved a Mini Cooper.

Fire crews from Plaistow were called to the scene at about 1.30am on Tuesday and spent about 45 minutes tackling the flames.

The cause is still uncertain and the investigation will determine whether the blaze was started deliberately.

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