



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 9th February 2010

BARNFIELD SOUTH ACADEMY MARKS MAJOR BUILD MILESTONE

The new £29m Academy for Barnfield South reached a significant build milestone this week as Luton Borough Council and Wates Construction held a topping out ceremony on the Rotheram Avenue site.

The development is due to be completed in early 2011 and will see the school provide an additional 550 pupil places, including a 250 capacity sixth form. New facilities will include all weather sports pitches and indoor games courts, conservation areas for wildlife study, state-of-the-art-equipped dance and music rooms and a theatre; the majority of which will be available to the local community.

Wates Construction began work on Barnfield South Academy in June 2009 as part of Luton Borough Council's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme that will see the construction and refurbishment of eleven secondary schools and two academies over the next four years. Luton's BSF programme extends well beyond a typical BSF framework to include new affordable housing, an aquatic centre, new libraries, a 250-seat community theatre and a specialist centre for disabled children.

Cllr Tahir Khan, Luton Borough Council's executive member for children's services, said: "This topping out marks another big step forward. Thirteen new or refurbished secondary schools in four years is a big undertaking for any local education partnership. But in Luton we are not stopping at the school gates. Our partnership with Wates is also delivering a breathtaking programme of community improvements and some badly needed affordable homes. The entire programme is worth over half a billion pounds, which will also greatly benefit the local economy."

Ian Vickers, Business Unit Director from Wates Construction, said: "It is always rewarding to be involved in a project that will improve and enhance the learning experiences of young people. We're making great progress and are well on track to have the new Academy complete by February 2011. A significant number of our site team and

supply chain are local Lutonians and have been busy not only building new facilities, but building solid relationships with the local community to offer apprenticeships and employment opportunities and making a real difference to the local community.”

Historically, the topping out ceremony marks the topmost beam being placed in the building to complete the structure. Its origins harp back to pagan times where the purpose of the ceremony was to ward off ancient spirits and give a building the blessing of tree spirits. It traditionally saw a leafy branch of a tree set atop the roof.

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For further information please contact Lisa Margis on 0161 236 0008 or 07748 301 005

Notes to Editors

Luton Building Schools for the Future is being delivered by the Luton Learning Community Partnership (LLCP); a joint venture limited company formed between Luton Borough Council, the non-departmental public body, Partnerships for Schools and QED Education Environments, part of the Wates Group.

Wates is one of the UK's largest family-owned construction services and development companies. Established in 1897, it remains privately owned by the Wates Family. Wates employs more than 2,200 people and had a turnover of £1,009 million in 2008.

The company works across a range of sectors, including education, prisons, affordable housing, retail fit out and refurbishment, office interiors, land development and commercial buildings.

Wates has three areas of Corporate Responsibility focus: to reduce the impact of CO2 emissions from our activities, eliminate all non-hazardous waste to landfill by 2010 and boost skills and employability in areas of most need. Wates was awarded Silver status in the 2008 Business in the Community Responsible Business index.

Safety is a top priority and the Group's excellent record has resulted in RoSPA Gold Awards for Occupational Safety and British Safety Council Awards for the past six years.