

# New park for Deptford

The disused site of a former power station is now a new park, complete with a playground, a young people's park and a nature reserve.

A groundbreaking £0.5m project in Deptford has transformed a disused site into a new park and playground. The Ferranti Park, situated opposite the Laban international dance centre, was funded by Lewisham Council and the London Development Agency. It was officially opened on 19 June by Steve Bullock, Mayor of Lewisham, with Patrick Brown, chair of the local tenants association and local children. Sarah Tibbatts, winner of a competition to name the park, unveiled a plaque and dancers from the Laban centre joined in the celebrations with an outdoor performance.

The park was named after Sebastian Ferranti, who planned the design and building of the London Electric Supply Corporation's Deptford Power Station, the world's first large-

scale electricity operation. He went on to establish the principle of the national grid. The park railings were designed by local artist Heather Burrell. They are based on water pipes made by the old potteries, which were based nearby from 1730 till 1961.

The whole project will create a major asset for local communities, adding to the green spaces that have been supported by local conservationists over the years and will transform the five-minute walk between Deptford Station and the Laban centre. The development of the park forms part of a major drive to revitalise the Deptford area of Lewisham. This includes plans to make the area a hub for London's creative industries, along with proposals to redevelop the high street and Deptford Station, the world's oldest

suburban railway station.

Local resident, Emma Moore, said: "It's great to see how a small, unused space can be turned into such a brilliant new playground. The children obviously love it – watching them all run in once the ribbons were cut was proof of that!" And another local resident, Rabeya Assad commented: "The park is very convenient because it is so close. My daughter loves the play area. Me and my husband also love it; we think it's really unique."



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## Changes will make school admissions fairer

The way in which parents apply for places at secondary schools across London is changing this year. A new system is being introduced to make the process fairer and easier for parents to manage.

All 33 London boroughs plus eight councils that border the capital have agreed to co-ordinate admissions to their schools.

The big differences that parents will see are that they will use one form to list all the schools they would like to apply for in order of preference, they will receive no more than one offer – the best that can be made – and they will be sent their offers at the same time as everyone else. Schools will still apply their usual admissions policies to decide who to offer places to, but they will work through the local education authorities who will work out the best offer that can be made to each parent, based on their order of preferences. If a pupil could be offered more than one place, then the

offer that will be made will be for the school ranked highest on the application form.

"Co-ordinating admissions will lead to a fairer system with more parents being offered one of their preferred schools earlier and fewer receiving no initial offer at all," said Katy Donnelly, cabinet member for children and young people. "It will reduce stress on parents and pupils at a very important time for them."

All offers will be sent to parents on 1 March 2005.

### Factfile

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