

IN BRIEF

Star Susanna goes to ITV

CROYDON: Presenter Susanna Reid is switching channels.

Reid, 43, will leave BBC Breakfast to front the new ITV breakfast show Good Morning Britain.

The former pupil at Croham Hurst and Croydon High schools, who was born in Purley and grew up in the borough, will front the new show from later this year, alongside Ben Shephard, Charlotte Hawkins and Sean Fletcher.

Good Morning Britain is replacing Daybreak, which has failed to attract viewers since it was launched with Adrian Chiles and Christine Bleakley at the helm.

Crystal Palace fan Reid's profile was raised when she reached the final of last year's Strictly Come Dancing.

Run for charity

SELSDON: The town's half-marathon takes place this month.

Runners are currently training for the event, starting at 10am on March 22, to raise money for charity.

The run begins at the Selsdon Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, on the corner of Ashen Vale and Addington Road.

The charities chosen this year are the South East Cancer Help Centre, in Purley, and Reach The Children, which helps children in Africa. So far 160 people have registered.

■ For more information, call 020 8657 2211 or e-mail david.eaton@business-advantage.com



POSITIVE: Lanfranc head teacher David Clark said he hoped a deal could be struck within the next few weeks



SPONSOR: Coloma Convent head teacher Maureen Martin has previously worked with two struggling schools in Croydon

Borough's best school to save struggling secondary?

Coloma Convent in talks over 'sponsoring' Archbishop Lanfranc

By Gareth Davies

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THE borough's top-performing state secondary is in talks to become the academy sponsor of Croydon's worst performing school.

Discussions between Coloma Convent Girls' School, which topped last summer's GCSE league tables, and The Archbishop Lanfranc School are still in their early stages.

It would be the second time the Catholic secondary, in Shirley, has worked with the school with the lowest exam results in Croydon, having taken over Selsdon High in September 2009.

The Department for Education (DfE) has been searching for a sponsor for Archbishop Lanfranc, in Mitcham Road, since the school was placed in special measures by Ofsted in October last year.

Head teacher David Clark was reluctant to discuss the potential arrangement when contacted by The Advertiser this week.

"There is someone who is interested and we're in conversation with them," he said.

"The various formalities have yet to take place. Once they have, and we would hope that will be in

the near future, we will have more to say."

Coloma is one of the borough's most popular and best-performing schools. Last summer 95 per cent of its GCSE pupils achieved at least five A* to C grades including English and maths.

In comparison, just 41 per cent of pupils at Archbishop Lanfranc met that standard – its worst results in five years – though the two schools have vastly different intakes.

Coloma and its head teacher Maureen Martin have a history of working with the borough's struggling schools.

Improved

In 2009, Mrs Martin was appointed executive head of Good Shepherd RC Primary and Nursery School, in New Addington, after it was judged to be "inadequate" by Ofsted. Twelve months and an improved inspection later, Good Shepherd was named Croydon's school of the year.

In September 2009, Coloma began a more formal arrangement with Selsdon High, becoming the sponsor of the newly-opened Quest Academy. Since then its GCSE results have risen from 41 per cent to 62 per cent, just

below the borough's average.

Mrs Martin declined to comment on a potential collaboration with Archbishop Lanfranc this week.

Tim Pollard, the council's education chief, welcomed the partnership if it were to happen, saying: "Coloma's track record is very good. It has done a fantastic job with Quest. They have really turned around a school that had spent many years and many iterations in difficulty.

"Coloma is strongly committed to Croydon and to its children, so we would always welcome their involvement in any school in the borough."

While not willing to discuss the negotiations directly, Lanfranc head Mr Clark said he was pleased progress might finally be made after months of inactivity.

He said: "I don't think uncertainty helps anyone. Once that is removed then people can move forward. Until it happens it's more difficult to do what we would normally be doing at this time in preparation for the next school year."

Mr Clark added: "Nothing has been agreed yet, but I would hope that within the next fortnight or so we will be able to say more."

Sight loss support group is revived

A SUPPORT group for people suffering from sight loss is being relaunched a year after closing.

The Macular Society's Croydon branch closed last year due to a lack of volunteers.

The charity has now restarted the group and has organised its first meeting for March 12.

Age-related macular degeneration is the most common cause of sight loss in the UK, affecting more than 500,000 people.

Annette Gahlings, 76, used to attend the Croydon group before

it was disbanded.

"I've had macular dystrophy for quite a long time," she said.

"It can be very frustrating. It was difficult to give up driving and become more reliant on other people. I'm pleased the group is being relaunched. There were a lot of people who were disappointed when it stopped.

"The group gives people an opportunity to meet others in a similar position and discuss the problems they are having with their sight."

Tom McNulty, group support and development manager for the Macular Society, said: "This group is here for anybody affected by macular degeneration.

"It's good to be able to learn from each other's experiences and get tips."

The group plans to invite guests to speak on a variety of subjects including how to manage the impact of the condition.

■ The meeting is to take place at St Andrew's Church, Southbridge Road, Croydon, at 10am.

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