

Entrepreneur McColl picks city head to lead new school

EXCLUSIVE

By **PETER SWINDON**



ONE of Scotland's wealthiest businessmen handpicked the head of Govan High to lead his new apprenticeship school.

Newlands Junior College is the brainchild of Glasgow entrepreneur Jim McColl, who amassed an estimated £1bn fortune despite dropping out of school at 16 with 3 O grades.

The venture will see teenagers offered the chance to learn a trade in a refurbished office block on the former site of Mr McColl's Clyde Union Pumps factory in Cathcart.

Iain White was poached after 20 years at the helm of Govan High

Mr McColl said; "I visited Govan High on many occasions and was impressed by the way the school was run by Iain as the head teacher. "I was particularly impressed by his passion for the potential of all young people and his dedication to helping make the best of their talents.

Writing in "The Heidie's Blog" on the Govan High website, Mr White admitted it was a wrench to walk away.

He said "I have long been passionate about the absolute imperative that the schools



prepare young people for positive destinations and get them there. It was an offer I could not refuse. I am very sad to be leaving Govan High. I have loved my job, loved the school and loved the pupils."

Councillor Stephen Curran, executive member for education and young people, praised Mr White. He said: "Iain was highly committed to the education of his young people and developing positive relationships with the

the local community and businesses."

Glasgow City Council is yet to appoint a replacement with interviews expected to begin soon.

Mr White will be responsible for the training of 30 youngsters when the college opens in October. It is hoped the venture will provide a guaranteed apprenticeship after two years.

He has already advertised for a £55,000-a-year depute principal and four teachers of English, maths, ICT and science. Mr White said: "It will be a school for pupils in S3 and S4 who will come from Glasgow's south side. Newlands Junior College will have a radical curriculum and a creative approach."

Youngsters who have failed to fit in to mainstream schools are expected to be targeted by the scheme.

Mr McColl said: "The strategy seems to be to get everybody into university, and if you don't then it's a failure - I

I don't think that should be the case. I think there's a need for a system which takes kids out in S3 or S4 and offers them an alternative.

"These are people who are as talented as any other people. They have latent talent which perhaps hasn't been brought out by a traditional academic path."

The college is understood to be funded by a partnership between six private investors, the Scottish Government and the city council, with each of them injecting £100,000 into the project.