

FORUM URGES FRESH LOOK AT SCHOOL KITCHENS

New head of the Local Authority Caterers Association (LACA) Beverley Baker, speaking at the London School Kitchens Forum, urged more thought to be given to kitchen and dining facilities on new building projects.

The forum, organised jointly with PKL, addressed key issues facing catering in schools. Delegates included catering and facilities management specialists from a number of local authorities, as well as representatives from associations and central government.

A key focus of the day was the opportunities to improve catering facilities within the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and Primary Capital Programme initiatives.

Baker noted that BSF projects often give little thought to improving catering facilities, despite the wealth of scientific evidence linking the quality of dining facilities with learning, behaviour and wellbeing.

"An important part of our education vision is that all children should have a pleasant dining environment, seated in the company of others."

She added that if these aspirations were to be met, there will be a need for greater capacity for cooking, serving, dining, clean-up and changing areas. It would make sense, she said, to take this into account when building or refurbishing schools.

Simon Lucas, a partner at EC Harris supported this view, calling for "fully joined up thinking around the whole eating experience".



**LACA head Beverley Baker:
school kitchen plea**