



**OUTSTANDING**  
Olympic  
bronze  
medalist  
Katharine  
Merry meets  
students  
during a visit  
to Swindon  
Academy.

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# 'WE'LL NEVER GIVE UP'

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## Olympic stars call in to inspire students

**DREAMS** of sporting excellence are being kept alive at Swindon Academy thanks to Olympians popping in to inspire students.

Olympic bronze medallist Katharine Merry and gold medallist David Hemery visited students to encourage them to follow their dreams.

Katharine talked to 300 students telling them how she aspired to be like sprinter Kathy Cook as a child and predicted her own appearance at the Olympics.

She went on to win bronze in the 400 metre sprint at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney.

Her visit was part of the Be the Best you can Be programme run by charity 21st Century Legacy.

Swindon Academy headteacher Jan Shadick said: "The inspiration offered by our Olympians and Paralympians who strive to achieve their goal is incredibly powerful and can really reach out and touch young people today.



**GOLD STANDARD** David Hemery chats to children and signs autographs

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"The programme is a huge support to us as we work hard to raise the aspirations of all our young people."

Swindon Academy's involvement in the Be the Best you can Be programme is focusing on Year

7 students for the second year in a row.

Darren Campbell – part of the British 100m relay team, which won Olympic gold in 2004 – visited the school in January as part of 21st Century Legacy's work.

Mr Hemery, who won the 400m hurdles at the 1968 Olympics, established the charity to boost the achievements of young people.

He said: "This programme complements their education and inspires them to make a positive difference in their lives and in their communities."

As part of the programme, children's dreams are being displayed on posters around Swindon Academy and are working out their goals in Personal Health and Social Education classes.

Academy assistant principal Nick Warren said Katharine was a big inspiration for the students.

"Everyone wanted her autograph and photograph," he said.

"Although some of them were only three or four when she won her medal, they appreciate how good she was.

"The students can see anyone can do the impossible.

"They have been learning they should never give up."