



Academies & independent schools: prospectus



department for
children, schools and families

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1. Introduction

This is a prospectus to encourage successful independent fee-paying schools in England to play a greater role in creating a world class educational system for all children and young people.

It sets out the case for sponsoring or supporting an academy. It also sets out how a successful independent day school might itself become an academy in order to broaden its intake and spread educational opportunity to all local children where there is a need for more high quality school places.

Fee-paying and non fee-paying schools in England have developed in relative isolation over the past century and more. Each sector has its distinct strengths. The academies programme provides a new opportunity for successful independent schools to play a role in the direct management of state-funded schools to replace low-performing schools and promote new opportunities for disadvantaged pupils.

Academies are a new type of state school, established in areas of educational disadvantage, and demonstrating independence, leadership and innovation whilst working in partnership with other local schools and children's services. Academies receive all their revenue funding from

the state at a level comparable to other local schools, so no fees are paid by parents. But they differ from other state schools in that they are supported and managed by independent sponsors.

Following a recent policy change, successful independent schools are not required to provide a cash endowment when sponsoring an academy. This allows the independent school as sponsor to concentrate on the role it is uniquely placed to fulfil: applying its professional expertise in matters of teaching, learning, enrichment, ethos and organisation to enable the new academy to thrive.

This is not a one-way street. The benefits are reciprocal. Once the academy is open, major benefits flow in the other direction, as the parent school gets opportunities for learning and exchange with the new academy, and with a wider network of state and non-state schools. The staff and young people of both schools, and the wider community, all gain.

Many successful independent schools are already sponsoring academies, and playing a direct role in their management. These schools have found that, without compromising their own success, or unacceptably diverting their own resources

derived from parents' fees, they can successfully contribute towards major improvements in education which benefit a wider community than their own school. A number of successful independent day schools are choosing to go a further step and themselves become academies, ceasing to charge parental fees, with a mission to make their excellent education more widely available than in the past.

The academies programme offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to break down the historic divide between the state and private sectors of education in England. This prospectus sets out how your own school can engage.



2. Why academies?

Academies are all-ability state schools with a mission to transform education. They are set up where the local status quo in secondary education is simply not good enough, or where there is a demand for new school places. They are established and managed by independent sponsors, and funded by the Government at a level comparable to other local schools. They are not maintained by the local authority, but they are set up with its full consent and collaborate closely with it and other schools in the area. No fees are paid by parents.

Some academies are brand new schools in areas needing extra school places. Others replace weak or under-performing schools; as a broad rule of thumb, the Government is prepared to consider as a potential academy project any secondary school where in 2007 fewer than 30% of pupils gained five or more good GCSEs including English and maths. A third category is day schools which were fee-paying but want to become academies in order to transform their contribution to local education by expanding and broadening their pupil intake to the benefit of all local students.

Strong, ambitious leadership, effective management, high aspirations for all pupils and good teaching are essential ingredients in the success of schools. They are also stimulating a culture shift in ethos and expectations. Where academies replace challenging schools it will inevitably take time to transform standards, but almost all academies are demonstrating year on year improvement substantially above the national average. The National Audit Office's evaluation of academies, published in February

2007, concluded that "performance is improving faster in academies than in other types of school, including those in similar circumstances". The key achievements of academies to date are set out at later in this document.

As of September 2007 there are 83 academies open in 49 local authorities, with a further 50 projected to open in September 2008. The sponsors include educational foundations, philanthropists, businesses, private school trusts and the faith communities, all with the full backing of local authorities. The Government is committed to establishing 400 academies as part of the creation of a world class education system. It regards scaling up the programme as a key contribution to this ambition, and has committed sufficient resources to ensure that it will happen.

Each academy is unique. Because of the programme's focus on fitting each academy to its community and circumstances, their success has been sustained as the programme has expanded, and there is every reason to believe that this will continue to be the case.

3. Why should successful independent schools engage with academies?

This prospectus is directed at fee-paying schools which have been a focus of excellence in education in England for decades if not far longer. It is an invitation to them to get involved, because it will be of mutual benefit.

More than 20 independent schools – or their sponsoring trusts – have already engaged with the academies programme. As the case studies indicate, there are a range of motivations, but the common threads are these:

- The academies programme offers a unique opportunity to get involved at the ground floor in a major educational venture - setting up, shaping and nurturing a new school – and transferring the key characteristics of excellence (“the DNA”) of the parent school to a brand new school.
- The venture can develop within a secure funding environment, where the state guarantees the core start-up and recurrent costs. There is no need to turn away children who could benefit but cannot meet thresholds of ability or income.
- Where beneficial the Government will also help to match potential independent school sponsors with co-sponsors, able to complement the skills or mission of the independent school sponsor.
- There is no need for the parent school to spend any of its own fee income, nor to dilute its provision for its own pupils. Instead the parent school can contribute what it is best placed to offer – leadership, expertise, time, staff training and development, shared facilities and activities, a strong focus on excellence and developing human potential.
- Sponsoring schools see their partnership with the new academy as reciprocal, bringing long-term benefits to the parent school through opportunities for:
 - staff to work closely with colleagues who are equally passionate about education but whose experience is mainly single-sector;
 - students to work and learn together in an expanded, and often socially more mixed, community.
- Many independent school sponsors believe that setting up a new academy helps to fulfil the original vision of their founders, to

provide excellent education for the whole community rather than mainly to the children of those who can afford expensive fees.

In short, the programme establishes an opportunity to do something big, important, new and worthwhile in education, which benefits all those directly involved, contributing to the healthy development of our whole society.



4. What are the options for getting involved?

There are three main types of involvement for a fee-paying independent school in the academies programme.

- To become the **lead sponsor** of a new academy.
- To become a **co-sponsor** of a new academy, providing significant support through transfer of educational expertise, but looking to other sponsors to lead on other aspects of the school's development.
- To **become** an academy.

These options are explored in the following sections, together with case-study illustrations.

(a) Sponsoring an academy (as lead sponsor)

As the lead sponsor, an independent school (or grouping of such schools) takes on the full responsibility for setting up the new academy. The state is the hidden partner, guaranteeing to meet initial capital costs and subsequent running costs. But the key decisions about the strategic direction of the new school will lie with the sponsor. In return for this degree of control, the sponsor puts in the hard graft – taking a leadership role on the governing

body, setting goals and standards, determining academic, curriculum and admissions strategy, hiring and managing top staff, in short running the new academy alongside its existing school or schools.

Until recently the lead sponsor of an academy had been required to provide sponsorship of £2 million. On 10 July the Government announced that sponsors which are existing high-performing education institutions – whether universities, colleges or independent schools – would in future be exempt from this requirement. We want successful independent schools to sponsor academies for their educational expertise and commitment, not their bank balances.

Academies sponsored by education institutions receive public funding (for initial set-up and for running costs) on the same basis as any other academy. Where beneficial, the Government will help education lead sponsors to identify potential co-sponsors.

This is a major opportunity to get more excellent fee-paying schools or groups of schools engaged with an academy, without diverting their own cash resources unacceptably.

Lead sponsor of academies – United Learning Trust

The United Learning Trust (ULT) is an educational charity created to manage a number of academies spread across the country. It is a subsidiary of the United Church Schools Trust (UCST), which owns and manages 11 fee-paying schools, of which 9 are 4-18 “through” schools. ULT and UCST have the common objective of managing schools which offer students a high quality education.

ULT is the lead sponsor of 13 academies in Manchester, Lambeth, Northampton, Salford, Barnsley, Walthamstow, Paddington, Sheffield, Stockport, Banbury and Swindon. This makes it the largest grouping in the programme. Working together as a group has significant benefits for teachers, pupils and parents. This feature of the academies within ULT, together with UCST’s long experience in high quality education, makes this sponsorship unique.

UCST joined the academies programme after considering, in 2000, what their own founders in 1883 might have done in the modern age. The Trust concluded that the original founders would have wanted to spread educational excellence well beyond the roughly 8% of parents who can currently pay school fees. The Government’s long-term commitment to the academies programme, with its opportunity of genuine independence within a state funding regime, seemed to the Trust to provide the necessary guarantee to underpin a stable and durable partnership.

The ULT approach is to engage with good academy projects anywhere in England. It aims to create an active network of the 23 ULT and UCST headteachers from both sectors, who meet five times a year. The 1,700 teachers from the network schools can apply to undertake a specialist MA degree through a programme developed by Warwick University and tailored to the group’s needs. Thus the benefits of interchange are spread through the network nationally.

A recent departure is to offer joint sponsorship and management facilities, alongside a non-ULT school undertaking the lead role in academic direction. Thus Marlborough College, co-sponsoring Swindon Academy (see separate text box) is partnering with ULT to provide many services, leaving Marlborough to focus more particularly on the curricular and academic aspect of launching the academy and achieving excellence.

Having built up its own capacity through a central team skilled in running academies, ULT believes it could offer similar services to other fee-paying schools wanting to engage with the academies programme. This idea could appeal to a school interested in devoting significant energy to supporting teaching and learning, but less keen to deal with all the nuts and bolts of staffing, operating and managing a new academy.

Joint sponsor of academies: Woodard Schools and West Sussex

In September 2007 it was announced that three new academies along the south coast will be opened in partnership between Woodard Schools, a highly experienced educational trust, as lead sponsor, and West Sussex County Council as co-sponsor.

The three academies will replace a community school in Littlehampton and community colleges in Lancing and Shoreham. At least £70m will be invested in these schools, which will play a key role in the regeneration of the local communities.

Woodard Schools is a family of over 40 schools that crosses the maintained and independent sectors (23 of them wholly owned by the corporation), sharing information and best practice for the benefit of all. Taking part in the academy programme is a natural extension of the existing network. Three of Woodard's independent secondary schools – Lancing, Ardingly and Hurstpierpoint Colleges – are in West Sussex. The Trustees consider that the academy programme well matches the aspirations of the founder, Nathaniel Woodard, in 1848 to provide the highest standard of education for all. The Woodard schools currently educate 27,000 children each year and this number will grow with the new academies.

Woodard and West Sussex will now start the feasibility process including local consultations, and subject to these the schools could open as academies in two to three years, with new buildings following as soon as possible.



Lead sponsor of an academy – Dulwich College and the Isle of Sheppey

Following a review by an independent consultant of the options for transforming secondary education on the Isle of Sheppey, the Government announced on 27 July 2007 its intention to proceed to the feasibility stage of implementing a two-site federated academy funded by a capital budget of £50m of public money. This major project, under the project leadership of Dulwich College, will eventually provide education for 2,700 pupils, including 300 sixth-formers, in state of the art new accommodation.

Dulwich College had been interested for some time in engaging with the academies programme because it seemed to offer such a good fit with the original aims of the founder, Edward Alleyn, in 1619. Over the years the college had been able through bursaries to extend the range of its own intake to parents who could not afford full fees. But there was clearly a limit to how many children could be reached by this approach.

Meanwhile Dulwich had itself gained unique experience of transferring its educational expertise to other schools, through a network of franchised schools overseas. These schools in China had shown the possibilities of spreading not merely the name and prestige of Dulwich, but the essential elements of its educational approach. The College had worked through, in the development of this franchise, key issues such as the balance between the positive returns from external engagement and the risks of diversion and dilution from the “day job” of the College’s own pupils, and concluded that if done in the right way there were few disadvantages and many benefits. It was therefore ripe to consider engaging with another school in England.

The link between Dulwich College and the Isle of Sheppey project arose from a personal connection – the current Master, Graham Able, had previously lived and taught in Kent and was familiar with the circumstances. He was confident that the College would be able to work closely with Kent County Council. The Dulwich Governing Body supported this approach with enthusiasm.

The governors see it not as a weakness but a strength that the Isle of Sheppey is at some distance from Dulwich. This means that there is less risk of confusion between what the College is doing within the Southwark Schools Learning Partnership, a grouping of 3 independent and 7 maintained schools in Southwark, delivering opportunities for sharing facilities and engaging in joint projects to the benefit of pupils and the community in the immediate area. By contrast the Sheppey partnership is at this stage more about injecting strategic vision and expertise, than about actual exchanges at school level. Of course this could change over time.

The main planning work for the new academy falls to a single senior staff member responsible for the external school links including the franchised schools, and does not cause significant diversion for other staff. By this means the College expects to retain strong governor and parent support for engagement with the project.

(b) Supporting an academy (as a co-sponsor)

This section flows naturally from the discussion of ULT's approach to lead sponsorship and co-sponsorship. An independent school may

choose to become a co-sponsor of a new academy, providing significant support through transfer of educational expertise, but looking to other sponsors to lead on other aspects of the school's development.

Supporting an academy: Marlborough College and Swindon Academy

In September 2007 Marlborough College announced a partnership with the newly-opened 0-19 academy in Swindon to share professional expertise and provide joint opportunities which will benefit young people from both schools. The partnership will include:

- sharing teaching skills by linking departments, with Marlborough supporting in particular the establishment of the new Sixth Form;
- sharing relevant expertise – for example in sports or performing arts – to develop joint enterprises to benefit young people in both settings; and
- sharing facilities and resources where appropriate and feasible.

This groundbreaking partnership arose from discussions over an extended period between

- the Master and governors of Marlborough College;
- Swindon Academy's lead sponsor, the United Learning Trust – whose Chief Executive Sir Ewan Harper is a former pupil of the College, and of which Edward Gould, the College's former Master, is a board member;
- Honda Motor Europe, a financial sponsor bringing real life experience to the academy's science specialism
- Sir Anthony Greener, Chairman of the academy's governing body and a former governor of Marlborough, who brokered the arrangement and contributed both funding and expertise.

Marlborough College sees the partnership as a means to share and broaden experience and expertise. The Swindon initiative has enabled it to work with two strong financial and organisational co-partners – Honda (a major local employer) and ULT (an experienced sponsor, with 13 academies open). Thus, without diverting any of its own income, the College can devote its energies to sharing expertise in teaching, learning and joint activities benefiting young people.

As Sir Anthony Greener puts it: *"The staff and the young people from the two schools can only benefit from real interaction. Sharing experiences and joint educational ventures will develop the talents of young people, and give them a better understanding of the diversity of our society. I have long advocated this link, and feel that this is precisely the type of partnership that independent schools should be looking to develop"*.

(c) Becoming an academy

For successful independent day schools that want to serve their whole local community and broaden their pupil intake, there is the opportunity to become academies – maintaining the benefits of their autonomy, ethos and leadership, but ceasing to charge fees.

In September 2007 two former fee-paying schools, William Hulme's Grammar School in Manchester and Belvedere Senior School in Liverpool, became academies. These schools had strong traditions of excellence and were meeting the needs of some local parents well – but felt the need to expand their mission. In both cases there was strong support from their

governing councils (the Girls' Day School Trust in the case of Belvedere). Both schools had been direct grant schools until the mid-1970s, and both see themselves as pioneering modern versions of the direct grant scheme. The Government will encourage other such applications from suitable schools where there is a need for additional good secondary school places.

Transfer of an existing high-performing and popular school into the academies programme raises different issues from the transformation of an under-performing maintained school. The Government, recognising this, intends to tailor the procedures for assessing such applications on their merits and against clear, published criteria. Details are set out in section 5 on page 14.

Becoming an academy – William Hulme's Grammar School, Manchester

At his death in 1691, William Hulme left money to support education for four poor men to study at Oxford University. The bequest was so substantial that over the centuries his trustees were able to expand educational support to establish schools in Bury, Oldham and Manchester, including the highly regarded William Hulme's Grammar School.

Recent changes in local demography led the school to consider how it could engage more effectively with the whole multi-racial community of the area, and to serve a wider range of pupils – not just those whose parents could afford the fees. In addition the school wanted to develop an international dimension to its curriculum, and a closer involvement with other cultures. Within the context of local schools each serving mainly a single section of the community, the school sought to become fully multi-racial and mixed ability. But even with an extended access programme based on additional bursaries funded by local businesses, this was not compatible with parental fees.

The possibility of academy status led the Manchester school's headmaster, Stephen Patriarca, to make an approach the Government in late 2005, which was warmly received. After discussion and feasibility studies the school became an academy in September 2007, sponsored by the United Learning Trust (see separate box).

Parental fees were abolished and existing entrance tests were replaced by fair banding by ability with a Manchester-wide intake, and selection of 10% of pupils by aptitude for languages (in which the academy will act as a centre of excellence for the city). The new intake is broader across the ability range, bringing in more pupils both at the top and bottom; the school has worked hard to prepare teachers for both. 70% of pupils come from ethnic-minority families across a broad area of Manchester. The academy is roughly ten times over-subscribed.

Becoming an academy – Belvedere Academy, Toxteth

Belvedere Academy, which opened in September 2007, is the first academy sponsored by the Girls Day School Trust (GDST). Since its foundation in 1872 the GDST has been at the forefront of British education, and a strong voice promoting opportunities for young women. Most of its schools are fee-paying but supported by extensive bursaries. After careful consideration the Trust has decided to engage with the academies programme as a new model of partnership and collaboration. It sees this as the best way forward to overcome barriers from the past, support inclusion and access, embrace innovation, and combine choice and diversity with excellence.

The predecessor school's Open Access scheme, funded by GDST and supported by the Sutton Trust, enabled a broader social intake, but as an academy these benefits apply to all students. Over time, with further investment in the buildings and facilities with the co-sponsor (HSBC Global Education Trust), the academy intends to admit more girls from across Liverpool and beyond, to a total of 800 pupils (of whom 250 will be in the Sixth Form).

The Trust is interested in the potential of the academies programme to develop curriculum areas which are strong in the fee-paying sector but relatively weak in the maintained sector, notably modern foreign languages and science; and to deliver real breadth, depth and innovation to an even wider intake. The new academy is specialising in the teaching of modern foreign languages, and will have enhanced facilities in its other specialist area of science. It will continue the tradition of high aspirations, an inclusive approach and excellent achievement which were the hallmarks of the predecessor school.



5. Tailoring project planning procedures to the needs of education-led sponsors

The sponsors' vision and leadership are vital to each project. The Department works with the lead sponsor and the local authority to develop a match between suitable locations and sponsors, following direct discussions between the Office of the Schools Commissioner (OSC) at the Department, and the potential sponsor(s), up to the point of an agreed **statement of intent**.

Proposals for the project are worked up into an **"Expression of Interest"** which is agreed by all the local stakeholders and put to Ministers. If Ministers are content to proceed, a **feasibility** phase begins, during which a project manager funded by the Department works with the sponsor(s) to develop the detail of the project and conduct a local consultation.

Once this feasibility project is completed successfully, the Department enters into a binding **funding agreement** with the sponsor(s). This details the essential characteristics of the academy, including size, location, subject specialism, admission arrangements, age-range and governance. There is then an implementation phase leading up to **opening of the academy**.

Given the importance of the decisions and the scale of public funding at stake, the procedures for passing through these various stages of

consultation and approval are necessarily rigorous. However, building on our experience to date, the Government will help in three ways:

- We will build up a team within the Department with special expertise in handling potential sponsorship by independent schools, alive to issues likely to be of special concern to their governors, staff and parents.
- We will tailor the procedures to match as closely as possible the needs of different types of academy project.
- We will provide maximum continuity through the different phases of planning and implementation.

The Department and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) provide additional support and advice as necessary. Sponsors also learn from each other in all these areas, and the SSAT is a catalyst for mutual engagement between sponsors and the project teams.

6. Governance – the role of lead sponsors and co-sponsors

Academies are set up as charitable companies to give sponsors and governors broad scope and responsibility for the ethos, strategic direction and leadership. The lead sponsors, together with any other private sector or charitable sponsors, of an academy appoint the majority of its governors.

Any project to replace a maintained school with an academy should be endorsed by the local authority at the feasibility stage, and local authorities' views are taken fully into account at the funding agreement stage.

Like other state-funded schools, the governing bodies of academies include stakeholder governors: a parent governor, a local authority appointee, and generally the Principal *ex officio*. They may also include a teacher and a staff governor, and one or more community representatives.

The governing body is accountable to the Secretary of State through the requirements of the funding agreement. The governing body must publish proceedings of meetings, prepare annual accounts and an annual report, and ensure its accounts are independently audited.

The academy governors are responsible for

- appointing the Principal
- employing the staff
- administering the finances
- authorising appointments and changes to terms and conditions
- approving the curriculum, personnel policies and procedures.

The governors are bound by law to act in the best interests of the academy, its pupils and the local community.. As a good employer we would expect academies to recognise staff associations.

As well as transforming the life chances of their own students, academies can help drive system-wide improvements in standards through collaboration with other local schools. Almost all established academies have developed positive links with schools of all types in their areas, and are keen to offer support to them, or to learn from them. Admissions arrangements are agreed with the Department and are in line with the School Admissions Code.

7. Supporting a Trust school

An independent school could also take another route towards direct engagement with an existing state school, namely to support its emergence as a Trust school by becoming a partner on the Trust.

Trust schools are foundation schools supported by a charitable foundation or “Trust” which shares the school’s aspirations and can support its continuing improvement. They continue to be maintained by their local authority, but through the Trust they gain the support of partners from the private, public and voluntary sectors. The Trust is not expected to make any financial contribution. Schools seeking Trust status are typically performing well above the level which would be considered for an academy project, but are ready to undertake an expansion or shift of direction. Many seek to formalise their existing positive relationships with external partners as a lasting legacy for their schools or draw from the experience and expertise of other schools and institutions. They can therefore benefit greatly from a partnership with a high-performing fee-paying school.

Further details about Trust schools are available from the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, via <http://www.specialistschools.org.uk/trustschools2/>, or from the Department using the contact details at the end of this document.



8 Conclusion – next steps

This prospectus shows that independent schools can engage with confidence with the academies programme. Those schools which have already done so are enthusiastic about the outcomes to date, and optimistic about the future prospects.

Sponsorship is of course a serious commitment which any potential sponsor will need to consider carefully. The Department is glad to assist in any way by providing further information and support. You can contact the Office of the School Commissioner directly; or if you prefer, you can speak in the first instance to a senior interlocutor from the independent school sector.

A set of information sources and web links is attached. These can be accessed directly via the electronic version of this prospectus, which can be downloaded from

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/academies/>



9. Contacts

a) Interlocutors from the independent schools sector

The following have indicated willingness to be contacted by interested schools:

Graham Able –
Dulwich College, Dulwich Common,
London SE21 7LD.

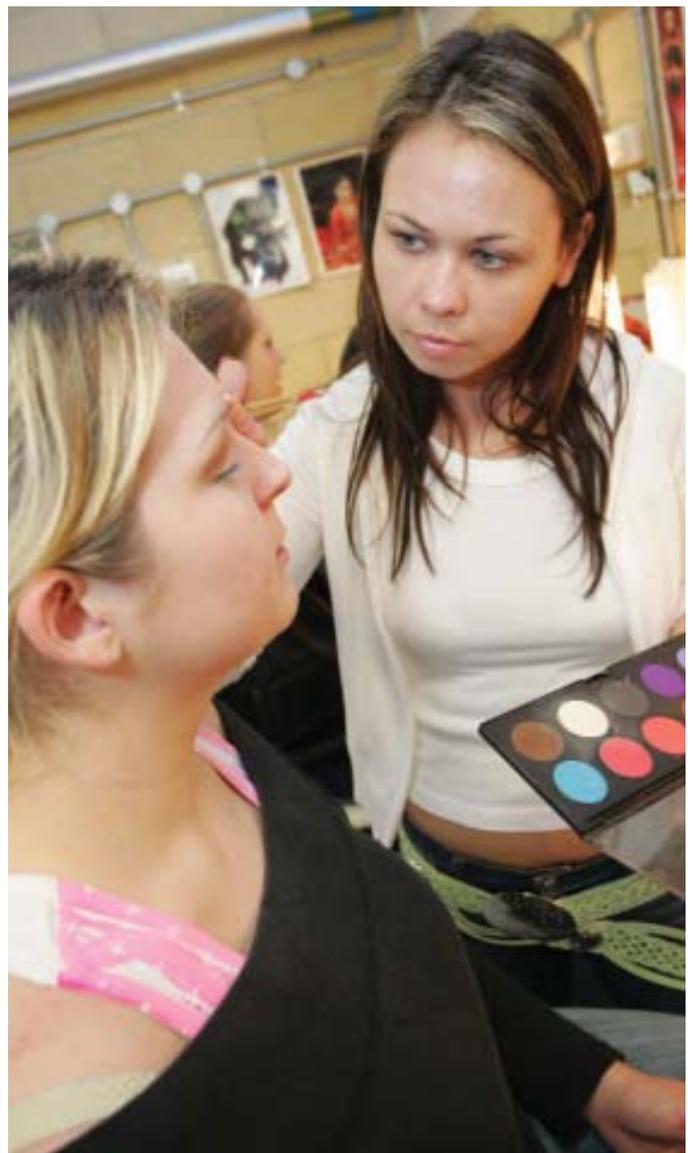
Anthony Seldon –
Wellington College, Crowthorne,
Berkshire RG45 7PU.

Edward Gould –
Brette College, Cross Lane, Branchester,
King's Lynn PE31 8AE.

Nicholas Sampson –
Marlborough College,
Wiltshire SN8 1PA.

Steve Patriaca –
William Hulme's Grammar School,
Spring Bridge Road,
Manchester M16 8PR

Keith Wilkinson –
The King's School,
Canterbury CT1 2ES.



Academy facts and figures

- The Government is firmly committed to establishing 400 Academies, with 200 open or in the pipeline by 2010.
- 83 academies open in 49 LA areas at September 2007, with 50 more projected by September 2008.
- Between 2005 and 2006 the proportion of students in academies getting five+ A*-C GCSE grades (including English and Maths) rose by 6 percentage points (compared with one percentage point nationally).
- 16 Academies have had full Ofsted inspections. One (Mossbourne) has been graded outstanding in every respect. four others have been grades as good, with a further 11 graded as satisfactory. Leadership and management of Academies is key to their future success – on this indicator two have been graded as outstanding, 13 good and one satisfactory.
- Academies are popular with parents. On average there are three applications for every place available in Academies. The five brand new Academies, without a predecessor weak or failing school, have nearly six applicants for every place. Academies directly replacing previously weak or failing schools have more than two applicants for each place. Academies replacing weak or failing schools are now filling nearly 25% more places than the schools they replaced.
- The 2007 PwC Academies Evaluation found that: “The general picture in relation to pupil performance in Academies is one of overall improvement against a range of indicators at Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and post-16 levels. Furthermore, Academies’ progress in terms of pupil achievement has generally exceeded corresponding improvements at a national level and amongst similar schools.”
- The National Audit Office report of February 2007 found that:
 - academies have made good progress in improving GCSE results, and their rate of improvement in GCSE and national tests is substantially better than other schools, including those in similar circumstances;
 - the programme is on track to deliver good value for money;
 - academies have high quality leadership and governance and improved teaching and learning;
 - academies are popular with parents and staff;
 - academies have buildings of good quality benefiting from a well-considered design process.
- 2006 report by NFER for the Local Government Association showed that academies are mainly situated in areas including higher than average proportions of children:
 - eligible for free school meals (FSM)
 - with special educational needs (SEN)
 - of lower Key Stage 2 ability
- The report also showed that Academies admit higher proportions of all three groups than the proportion living in their local postcode districts.

Q & A

1. What is an academy?

- a. Academies are state-funded all-ability schools established by sponsors from the education, business, faith or voluntary sectors, working with partners from the local community. Academies provide an excellent teaching and learning environment, offering a broad and balanced curriculum focused on one or more subject specialisms.

2. How long does it take to establish an academy?

- a. From approval of an expression of Interest to opening in existing buildings is typically around 2 years, with new buildings coming on stream thereafter. But cases may vary.

3. How will academies raise standards?

- a. Academies raise standards, often in the most disadvantaged and challenging areas, by innovative approaches to management, governance, teaching and the curriculum, and by involving highly committed sponsors who bring skills, expertise and resources.

4. How soon will that improvement shine through?

- a. New academies are unlikely to become successful overnight, given what is often a long legacy of under-achievement. However, there is a growing body of evidence that they are making significant progress – faster than the national average and significantly faster than other schools in similar circumstances. Academies teachers have high expectations of every pupil. Good teaching, excellent facilities and motivated pupils will deliver sustained improvements in standards.

5. How are academies assessed, inspected and held accountable?

- a. The Department's advisers work closely with academies to monitor progress and give support. Ofsted carries out monitoring visits to each new academy in its second year, and a full inspection (with published report) in its third year. Extensive longitudinal evaluations have been carried out by the National Audit Office and independent evaluators.

6. Does opening an academy adversely affect other schools?

- a. Quite the opposite. Academies are part of the local family of schools, sharing their facilities and expertise with other schools and the wider community, contributing to raising standards across the whole area.

7. Are academies selective schools?

- a. No, they are all-ability schools. Like other specialist secondary schools they can admit up to 10 per cent of pupils each year on the basis of aptitude for their specialism subject to regulations. Admission arrangements are agreed with the Department and are in line with the School Admissions Code.

8. Do academies get more money than other schools?

- a. We invest heavily in academies' set-up and buildings, to ensure that the new places created are excellent. The per-pupil running costs are the same as for any other local state school in similar circumstances – parity of funding is essential if innovations are to be replicable.

9. Do academies have to deal with lots of bureaucracy?

- a. Establishing a new academy requires a rigorous process because large sums of money are at stake. But we can tailor the process to the needs of each type of project, rather than applying a rigid template. From the outset, independent school sponsors will be able to talk informally with interlocutors from the sector. Thereafter we will aim to deliver continuity and expertise through a specialist team handling education-led projects through all the stages up to opening of the academy.



Glossary: types of state school

All state schools must teach a broad and balanced curriculum (subject to any agreed curricular specialism); are inspected by Ofsted; and must comply with legislation and guidance concerning employment, admissions and other matters.

The main categories are:

Maintained: a state school whose recurrent funded is provided through a local authority. The great majority of state schools are maintained schools. Leaving aside community special and foundation special schools, there are three main types: community, foundation and voluntary.

- **Community:** a maintained school whose assets are owned by the local authority which is also the employer of staff, the admissions authority, and the provider of premises.
- **Foundation:** a maintained school where the governing body is the employer of staff and the admissions authority, and either:
 - has a foundation – either long established, or acquired under the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Such schools are usually known as **Trust schools**. As described elsewhere in the prospectus, the foundation or trust often includes external partners from different sectors, including education; or
 - has no foundation.
- **Voluntary:** a maintained school, the majority having a religious character which will reflect that of a long-established foundation. The two categories are:
 - **Voluntary controlled:** the foundation usually owns the land and buildings but the local authority, employs the staff and (unless delegated) is the admissions authority.

- **Voluntary aided:** the foundation usually owns the land and buildings and the governing body normally contributes a minimum of 10 per cent of the costs of capital projects. The governing body employs the staff and is the admissions authority. Voluntary aided schools with a religious character have additional freedoms in the employment of staff and the RE curriculum.

Academy: A state school which is not maintained by a local authority but is centrally funded for initial set-up, and receives recurrent grants at the same level as local maintained schools. The school's sponsors commit expertise, leadership and/or funds, and appoint the majority of the governing body. The school is the employer and admissions authority.

City technology college: a school sharing many characteristics of an academy. Most CTCs have already converted to academy status.

Specialist: any state secondary school (including an academy) which has adopted a curricular specialism. Such a school must still deliver a full and balanced curriculum.

Web links to key documents/ data

Setting up an academy:

http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/academies/setting_up/

Directory of academies:

http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/academies/academies_directory/

Annual PriceWaterhouseCoopers academies
evaluation reports (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th):

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/academies/publications/>

National Audit Office evaluation report:

<http://www.nao.org.uk/pn/06-07/0607254.htm>

Copies of this publication can be obtained from:

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