

Guidance on becoming an Accredited School Provider or an Accredited Schools Group in the secondary phase

Criteria for accreditation



Introduction

This document aims to outline how organisations submitting proposals for accreditation can demonstrate evidence of the track record, capacity and educational expertise necessary to lead formal school improvement interventions, such as sponsoring Academies and leading majority trusts and federations, in underperforming secondary schools.

The educational track record criteria for maintained schools will be aligned with the National Leader of Education (NLE) and National Support School (NSS) criteria, which will be revised for the next tranche of NLE recruitment. This means that maintained schools which are designated as National Support Schools, with head teachers who are designated as National Leaders of Education, will not need to submit further evidence for the section on their educational track record. Those maintained schools which are not currently led by NLEs and which meet the criteria to be Accredited School Providers or Accredited Schools Groups can also be designated as NLEs and National Support Schools if they wish.

The criteria are set out in two parts:

Part One – Evidence which demonstrates the vision and capacity of the organisation to lead improvement in one or more schools through sponsoring Academies or being the lead partner in a majority trust or federation.

Part Two – Evidence which demonstrates a strong, successful educational track record.

Part Two outlines the criteria and examples for each sector. Currently all the examples of how an organisation might demonstrate its educational track record are in relation to the secondary phase. Separate criteria for those organisations seeking to be Accredited School Providers or Accredited Schools Groups in the primary phase will be produced shortly.

Organisations seeking accreditation as an Accredited School Provider or an Accredited Schools Group should complete both parts. Non-educational institutions and educational institutions without current experience of being directly accountable for the governance of a secondary school, college or university can seek accreditation as an Accredited School Provider only. More information on this is provided in the guidance document.

Organisations which wish to co-sponsor Academies and co-partner majority trusts and federations do not need to seek accreditation. However, they may do so as part of a consortium with a lead organisation that is seeking accreditation. In this case, both organisations should complete the area relevant to their sector.

Part One – Vision and capacity of the organisation to lead improvement in one or more schools through sponsoring an Academy or becoming the lead partner in a majority trust or federation

These types of partnerships are a long-term commitment. Organisations seeking accreditation will need the drive, influence and capacity to be able to lead transformational change in the schools they are supporting.

The proposal should therefore demonstrate the organisation's vision as an Accredited School Provider (ASP) or an Accredited Schools Group (ASG) and how it will ensure sustainable improvement for the schools it supports to ensure young people's achievement, personal development and well-being. It is therefore expected that proposals will include:

Vision

- The organisation's vision of what it would aim to achieve as an Accredited School Provider or an Accredited Schools Group, and their purpose in seeking accreditation;
- The particular contribution and ethos of the organisation and how they will ensure successful outcomes for schools and young people;
- How the organisation will ensure the quality of action and outcomes of the ASP or ASG;
- The organisation's understanding of the maintained school system; how to drive improvement and further development in schools which are underperforming, for a range of reasons and how to sustain outstanding performance and continuing improvement.

Capacity

- The leadership, governance and accountability arrangements and how these will be structured;
- The capacity the organisation has and will be able to develop, to deliver their vision, including the time and resources that will be committed at every level;.

N.B. if the organisation has no prior experience of sponsoring an Academy or leading a majority trust or federation, the proposal should demonstrate how the organisation will build up the relevant capacity and experience to lead these interventions successfully.

Assessment of this section:

The assessment of the proposals will be based solely on the evidence provided in the proposal and it may be necessary to follow this up with a discussion and a visit if further information is needed. The proposal should include examples and evidence as appropriate. The proposal should also specifically address the required areas and be as concise as possible. The table below sets out some of the expected information.

	Accredited School Providers and Accredited Schools Groups
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Purpose of the organisation in seeking accreditation, what it aims to achieve and what added expertise it will bring to ensuring pupils' outcomes; ● The outcomes it will seek to ensure for children and young people, in both the short and long term. This should include how attainment will be improved and how pupils' personal development and well-being will be secured; ● How the organisation will be accountable for supporting improvement and for the achievement of successful outcomes for all pupils.
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leadership, management and accountability arrangements; ● Capacity and time in the organisation, including the senior leadership team, governance and wider organisation, and roles and responsibilities envisaged in enabling the organisation to lead improvement in schools. This should include the names and responsibilities of key staff and their relevant experience, as well as the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) time they can each commit; ● Evidence of the effective impact of the governors, senior leadership team and staff; ● Evidence of working with and in consultation with staff to achieve improvement, including how the organisation engages meaningfully with unions, their commitment to good employer practice, equality and diversity, and the organisation's track record of staff/industrial relations; ● Recruitment, retention, professional development and succession planning. This should include what arrangements are in place for performance and management and professional development; ● Effective governance and oversight. This should include details of what the governance arrangements are and how leaders within the provider or group will be held accountable.

Capacity	<p>N.B.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If the organisation is already involved in significant partnership work to support school improvement, or is involved in structural solutions, as a National Support School (if a maintained school) or otherwise, this work should be cited. ● NLE/NSS capacity building evidence can be used to support the evidence submitted under this criterion.
	<p>In addition, for Accredited Schools Groups only</p>
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The systems and structures in place in the organisation to lead improvement in schools (including performance management, succession planning for governance and leadership, procurement expertise, buildings maintenance and procurement, HR and finance functions), and how these have been used effectively in schools for which they are already accountable; ● Capacity to establish and support schools, including how strong governance, leadership and management has been established in schools that are currently led by the provider, and how this would be achieved in future. This should include how the group will ensure high standards and ongoing improvement across its schools, and any quality assurance strategy that is in place; ● The provider’s method of school improvement; how this will be adapted to suit the needs of each school; what will be devolved and how consistency and quality will be ensured. This should include how improvements in outcomes have been achieved in publicly funded schools, including those in very challenging circumstances; ● The model for effective teaching and learning that the provider will use and develop within the schools they lead. This should include what educational support and expertise would be provided to schools and how this will be used to improve standards; ● An explanation of how leaders, governors and staff in individual schools be supported and held to account.

Part Two – Organisational and educational expertise and track record

A – For non-educational lead organisations seeking accreditation and educational organisations which do not have prior experience of being accountable for the governance of a secondary school, college or university

Non-educational organisations seeking accreditation, and those educational organisations which do not have prior experience of being accountable for the governance of a school, college or university, should demonstrate the track record and expertise they have in running a successful organisation. The proposal should explain the context of the organisation, include evidence of achievement and successful outcomes and outline how this is a good basis for leading improvement in schools in need of radical transformation and which have been significantly underperforming for some time.

All proposals should demonstrate evidence of knowledge of schools in the maintained sector. If the organisation already contributes to supporting improvement in schools the proposal should explain this and give evidence of the impact of the organisation's contribution and how this will support them to be effective as an Accredited School Provider.

We expect successful proposals will demonstrate an organisation's excellent track record against each of the areas of education track record: leadership and management; pupils' and students' achievement and partnership working. We have given examples of how we think this can be demonstrated by organisations under a section for each type of organisation. There will be more ways of demonstrating the area of track record than the given examples and these are intended as a guide only to the expectation of an organisation. However, where an organisation does not include information in relation to one of the example measures, and information is available on their performance in this area, this will form part of the assessment.

2.1 – Non-educational lead organisations

Type of track record	How it is possible to demonstrate this
<p>2.1a: Highly effective leadership and management</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of highly effective leadership and management of the organisation.</p>	<p>Evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● successful leadership, management and governance of an organisation and how this has been developed; ● the impact of leading and managing organisational improvement, development and change; ● the effective governance of an organisation and the impact of this; ● having successfully developed an organisation and contributing to its growth.
<p>2.1b: Achievement and outcomes</p>	<p>Evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● successful outcomes and how this has been achieved; ● improvement in outcomes and the organisation's role in this; ● innovative practice within an organisation which has led to successful outcomes.
<p>2.1c: Commitment to partnership working and engagement with schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence of having worked successfully with other organisations and how this has contributed to the organisation's goals; ● If applicable, evidence of what has been achieved through the organisation working with schools, both for the school and the organisation.
<p>2.1d: Educational and school improvement expertise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If the organisation is not submitting a proposal as a consortium with an educational co-sponsor, it should set out its education strategy and how it will access the relevant educational expertise and school improvement experience.

2.2 – Educational consultancies and charities and other educational institutions that are not directly accountable for governance of a secondary school, college or university

Type of track record	How it is possible to demonstrate this
<p>2.2a: Leadership and management</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of highly effective leadership and management of the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence of the impact of the organisation on pupils' outcomes, for example, through evaluation of the impact their programmes. ● Evidence of having personnel who have successful experience of governing or leading schools that meet the criteria for maintained school's: leadership and management; pupil achievement and partnership working. The roles and FTE commitment of personnel should be set out.
<p>2.2b: Pupils' achievement</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of strong pupils' achievement and well-being</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence that the activities of the organisation have contributed significantly to improving pupils achievement and well-being in schools in challenging circumstances, and what the particular contribution of the organisation has been.
<p>2.2c: Partnership working</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of successful partnership working to achieve improved educational standards, leadership and outcomes in a maintained school, or the potential to do so.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence of the impact of the organisation on supporting improvement in schools through collaboration and partnership working especially in schools in challenging circumstances.

B – For educational lead sponsors and partners seeking accreditation, and for educational co-sponsors and partners seeking accreditation as part of a consortium (for example, with a non-educational lead sponsor or partner).

Lead sponsors and partners need to have significant educational expertise and capacity and the skills to ensure sustainable school improvement.

Notes

Please note that once the content of the School Report Card has been finalised the criteria for accreditation in relation to maintained schools will be reviewed and are likely to be amended.

Secondary maintained schools which are National Support Schools and National Leaders of Education will not need to submit evidence that they have met the educational track record criteria, as these will have been assessed under the National College’s criteria. We are working closely with the National College and the NLE and NSS criteria for the next tranche of recruitment will be aligned with these accreditation criteria.

2.3 – Maintained schools

Type of track record	How it is possible to demonstrate this
<p>2.3a: Leadership and Management</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of highly effective leadership and management including governance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have received an Ofsted inspection that is ‘Outstanding’ in any two of the following judgements: ‘Overall Effectiveness’, ‘Leadership and Management’ and ‘Capacity to Improve’ with ‘Good’ in the third; ● From September 2009, have received an Ofsted inspection that is ‘Outstanding’ in any two of the following judgements: ‘Overall Effectiveness’ ‘The effectiveness of Leadership and Management in embedding ambition and driving improvement’ and ‘Capacity to Improve’ with ‘Good’ in the third; ● Evidence of the effectiveness of governance, for example, through this being highlighted in an Ofsted inspection report.

2.3b: High levels of pupils' achievement

Proposals should demonstrate evidence of sustained high performance or evidence of a strong upward trajectory in pupils' attainment and evidence that pupil progression is in the top quartile.

- Evidence of significant improvements in the percentage of pupils obtaining 5A*-C GCSEs including English and maths over the last 3 years (for example, top quartile from 2005 – 2008 would be an increase of more than 11 percentage points);
- Evidence that the proportion of pupils making three levels of progress in English and maths from KS2-4 is in the top quartile of schools nationally or that Contextual Value Added (CVA) scores are in the top quartile (for 2008 this was above 1011.4) ;
- Evidence of having successfully raised the attainment of pupils that are at risk of underachieving and narrowed the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils.

or

- Evidence of sustained high performance in the percentage of pupils obtaining 5A*-C GCSEs including English and maths (for example, above 60% would be top quartile for 2008 for non-selective schools, or 95% for academically selective schools);
- The proportion of pupils making three levels of progress in English and maths from KS2-4 is in the top quartile of schools nationally or that Evidence that CVA scores are in the top quartile (for 2008 this was above 1011.4) ;
- Evidence of having successfully raised the attainment of pupils that are at risk of underachieving.

In addition:

- Since September 2006 have received an Ofsted inspection where 'Achievement and standards' were judged to be at least 'Good'; or from September 2009, have received an Ofsted inspection where 'Achievement' is at least 'Good';
- Evidence of strong outcomes for pupils across the Every Child Matters framework.

<p>2.3c: Partnership working</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of successful partnership working which explains the impact on results, leadership and outcomes for both schools.</p>	<p>Evidence of the impact of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Head teacher’s work as a National Leader of Education (NLE) or Local Leader of Education (LLE); ● the school’s work as a National Support School, a High Performing Specialist School (including Training School) or a SSAT consultant (or advanced consultant) school; ● working with schools in a way that has achieved improvement in: for example, outcomes; recruitment and retention; or the leadership and governance of a school; ● working collaboratively with partner schools to provide or facilitate high quality learning opportunities and outcomes in their specialist subject(s), sharing specialist facilities and resources to enhance the quality of teaching and develop and disseminate good practice.
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2.4 – Independent schools

Type of track record	How it is possible to demonstrate this
<p>2.4a: Leadership and management</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of highly effective leadership and management, including governance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Independent Schools Inspectorate reports which describe senior leadership and management capability to be at least ‘Very Good’ or ‘Good’ (for inspections after January 2006) and no material regulatory failures; ● If the school provides boarding, assessment of this provision to ideally be ‘outstanding’ or at least ‘good’ in all aspects and for it to meet all of the national minimum standards; ● The impact of highly effective self-evaluation practice leading to constant improvement and/or the maintenance of consistently very high standards; ● Evidence of providing for the equality and opportunity of all pupils and groups of pupils.

<p>2.4b: Pupils' achievement</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of strong academic performance through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pupils' attainment; ● Improvement over time in pupils' attainment; ● Value Added Scores; ● Narrowing attainment gaps; ● Notable success in individual pupil development. 	<p>Evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● sustained high performance in the percentage of pupils obtaining 5A*-C GCSEs including English and maths (for example, above 95% including English and maths where academic selection is used; and above 80% where intake is non-selective); ● sustained high performance in the percentage of pupils obtaining other relevant qualifications, e.g. iGCSEs, A levels and International Baccalaureate; ● strong performance in the relevant value added scores such as MIDYSIS or ALIS or other measures; ● how the school ensures young people's well-being and pupil development.
<p>2.4c: Partnership working</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of successful partnership working with maintained schools to achieve improved educational standards, leadership and outcomes in a school, or the potential to do so.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The impact of a school's work with a school they are in partnership with, as demonstrated by outcomes in the partner school; ● A summary of what contribution the school could make to improving educational standards in a maintained school.

2.5 – Further Education (FE) and Sixth-form colleges

Type of track record	How it is possible to demonstrate this
<p>2.5a: Leadership and management</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of highly effective leadership and management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have received an Ofsted inspection that is 'Outstanding' in any two of the following judgements: 'Overall Effectiveness', 'Leadership and Management' and 'Capacity to Improve' with 'Good' in the third; ● Evidence of the effectiveness of governance, for example, through this being highlighted in an Ofsted inspection report; ● The impact of highly effective self-evaluation practice leading to constant improvement and the maintenance of consistently very high standards.
<p>2.5b: Students' achievement</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of sustained strong students' achievement and well-being or improvement in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students' attainment; ● Value added; ● Narrowing the achievement gap. 	<p>Examples of how this might be demonstrated are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The 16-18 learners success rate for long courses for similar colleges (FE, Tertiary or sixth form colleges) has been significantly above the relevant national average for the last two years; ● Qualification outcomes for 14-16 year olds (including diplomas and young apprenticeships) have been at or above the relevant national average; ● Have received an Ofsted inspection outcome with a grade of at least 'Good' for 'Outcomes and learners'.
<p>2.5c: Partnership working</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of successful partnership working to achieve improved educational standards, leadership and outcomes in a maintained school, or the potential to do so.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence of very successful partnership working to achieve improved educational standards, leadership and/or outcomes in a maintained school, including the impact on results; ● A summary of what contribution the college could make to improving educational standards in a maintained school.

N.B. FE colleges may wish to refer to the Framework for Excellence and their Beacon Status as appropriate.

2.6 – Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

Type of track record	How it is possible to demonstrate this
<p>2.6a: Leadership and management</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate the quality of leadership and management of the HEI.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence of high quality leadership and management would normally include the outcome of the most recent institutional audit by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education.
<p>2.6b: Students' achievement</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of students' achievement and well-being.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence of the excellent achievement of their students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. ● Information on teaching and learning policies and their impact on student progress and achievement.
<p>2.6c: Partnership working</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of successful partnership working to achieve improved educational standards, leadership and outcomes in a maintained school, or the potential to do so.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence of successful partnership working to achieve improved educational standards, leadership and/or outcomes in maintained schools, and the impact of this, for example through reference to any relevant aspects of their most recent Widening Participation Strategic Assessment; ● A summary of the contribution the institution could make to improving educational standards in a school.

2.7 – Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses, other faith groups and other organisations that are directly accountable for the governance of secondary schools

Type of track record	How it is possible to demonstrate this
<p>2.7a: Leadership and management</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of highly effective leadership and management.</p>	<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● of how the leadership and governance of the organisation has had a successful impact on pupils’ outcomes, for example through individual schools’ Ofsted or ISI inspection outcomes; ● that in a significant majority of the schools an organisation leads, they have had Ofsted or ISI inspections or equivalent, which have graded the school as ‘Good’ overall, or equivalent, or described the senior leadership and management of these schools to be at least ‘Very Good’ or ‘Good’; ● of the impact of policies which lead to highly effective self-evaluation practice leading to constant improvement and/or the maintenance of consistently very high standards providing for the equality and opportunity of all pupils and groups of pupils.
<p>2.7b: Students’ achievement</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate evidence of pupils’ achievement and well-being</p>	<p>Evidence of the track record of results over the last three years of results, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● if the schools an organisation lead are maintained schools in the UK, results for 5 GCSE A*-C including English and maths, have improved on average across all the schools and, in the significant majority of them, in line with or above the national average. In 2009, the national average was an improvement of 2.5% points; ● significantly positive CVA in the significant majority of schools; ● the percentage of pupils making three levels of progress is above the national average in the significant majority of the schools; ● high quality pupils’ achievement in qualifications which are equivalent to GCSEs; ● if the schools an organisation is directly accountable for are independent schools, evidence that a significant majority meet the criteria for that sector at 2.4; ● if the schools an organisation is directly accountable for are outside the UK, evidence that: examination results for qualifications equivalent to GCSEs are at a sustained high level or have shown continuous improvement at or above the national average.

2.7c: Partnership working

Proposals should demonstrate evidence of successful partnership working to achieve improved educational standards, leadership and outcomes in a maintained school, or the potential to do so.

- Evidence of the impact of the organisation on supporting improvement in schools through collaboration, for example, with other schools the organisation is responsible for, or across a diocese.

2.8 – Organisations that are lead sponsors of open Academies and open majority trusts and federations that have been established as a result of a Local Authority (LA) intervention

Academy Trusts and Majority Trust and Federation lead partners will be judged mainly on the basis of the performance in their Academies or schools they lead in a majority federation or trust at the point at which at least one of their Academies or schools has three years of KS4 results. Until that time we will make an assessment both on their own track record as an organisation and their track record so far as an Academy sponsor or lead partner of a majority trust or federation (such organisations should respond to the section relevant to their own sector as well as this section).

Type of track record

2.8a: Leadership and management

Proposals should demonstrate evidence of establishing highly effective leadership and management in schools led by the organisation.

How it is possible to demonstrate this

At least three-quarters of the schools for which an organisation is the lead sponsor or lead trust or federation partner have:

- received a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' assessment in the 'Overall effectiveness' grade in the last Section 5 assessment; or
- where a Section 5 assessment has not yet taken place, the school has been judged to be making at least 'Good' progress in their last Section 8 monitoring visit.

Action has been taken across all schools to strengthen staffing, leadership and management in the school and there is evidence of the impact of this.

2.8b: Pupils’ achievement

Proposals should demonstrate evidence of pupils achievement and well-being improving in schools led by the organisation.

At least three-quarters of the schools for which the organisation has been the lead sponsor or lead majority trust or federation partner for 3 years or more, have made strong improvements such as:

- an improvement in 5 A*-C GCSE results including English and maths, across the past three years, that is above the national average rate of improvement;
- significantly positive CVA or that the percentage of pupils making three levels of progress is above the national average;
- behaviour and attendance has improved as demonstrated by a drop in persistent absence rates and exclusions since opening;
- pupils’ outcomes have improved across the ECM framework;
- the popularity of the school has increased as demonstrated by an increase in first choice admissions since opening.

For schools for which the organisation has been the lead sponsor or lead majority trust or federation partner for less than 3 years, examples of strong improvement would be:

- Results for 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and maths in the schools have improved at or above the national average since the last year of the predecessor school’s results;
- CVA scores and/or the proportion of pupils making 3 levels of progress have increased since the last year of the predecessor school’s results;
- behaviour and attendance has improved through a reduction in persistent absence and exclusions, compared to the last year of the predecessor school;
- pupils’ outcomes have improved across the ECM framework.

2.8c: Partnership working

Proposals should demonstrate evidence of the commitment of the schools led by the organisation to work in partnership with other schools and organisations.

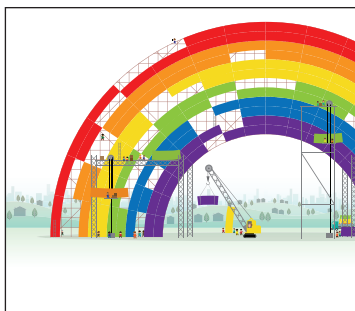
- Evidence that the Academy, trust or federated school is committed to developing as part of the community it serves and to raising standards within the borough.
- Evidence that the Academy, trust or federation has worked collaboratively with the other local schools.

Notes on 2.88

- 1) If there is significant cause for concern in a school or schools for which an organisation is the lead sponsor or lead majority trust or federation partner, for example, if a school is in an Ofsted category, the organisation should not seek accreditation.
- 2) The criteria above apply only to schools that have become Academies as a result of a LA intervention in response to concerns about standards. They do not apply to City Technology Colleges (CTCs) or high performing maintained schools that have become Academies (both of these should demonstrate evidence against the maintained schools criteria) and independent schools which have become Academies (which should demonstrate evidence against the independent schools criteria).

How do I find out further information?

DCSF Personnel are available to discuss any aspect of the accreditation process with interested organisations. Please email accreditation.system@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk for more information.



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D16(8598)/0210

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