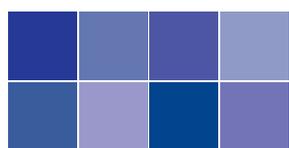


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Academies

Sponsor prospectus 2006



ACADEMIES

Schools to make a difference

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INTRODUCTION

England has many excellent schools. But it needs more; and it needs them nationwide – in every community, including those where parents and children have been failed for too long by inadequate schools, and where the existing structure offers little confidence that change will take place rapidly and on the scale needed.

Academies are a type of independent state school, transforming education in areas where the status quo is simply not good enough. They are sponsored and managed by independent sponsors and their annual revenue funding comes entirely from the government at a level comparable to other local schools. No fees are paid by parents.

Independent status is crucial in giving Academies the freedom and flexibility to succeed. It enables them to do whatever is necessary to provide effective teaching and learning, organisation, staffing and governance. Strong, confident, ambitious leadership, effective management, a clear vision, and knowing how to achieve that vision, are essential ingredients in their success.

The need for an Academy is agreed in the main with Local Authorities as part of their change planning for Building Schools for the Future (the Government's secondary school rebuilding programme). Their buildings – either new or remodelled – are mainly provided as part of that wider building programme and are on a par with the best in the maintained sector.

The Academies programme was launched in March 2000 as a development of the successful City Technology College (CTC) model. We are building on the success of that model and using the experience of CTCs to develop the Academies programme. A number of CTCs have now converted to Academy status, and more are considering conversion. A critical strand of the conversion process will be the formation of federations with weak or failing schools in their area.

CTCs are all-ability schools based in difficult urban areas which achieve some excellent results. For some CTCs there were significant hurdles to overcome. Harris CTC, which replaced a weak school (in its first year take up of free school meals was more than double the national average) achieved only 27% 5+ A*-C in its first two years of opening but within 5 years results were up to 64%. Their most recent results show 91% of their pupils achieve 5+ A*-C. Academies are beginning to make similar improvements for their pupils at GCSE and Key Stage 3 (KS3).

Evidence shows that Academies are bringing about improvements in behaviour and attendance and improved educational performance. They are also creating a culture shift in ethos and expectations. Academies replace some of our most challenging schools. Inevitably, it will take some time to turn these schools around and for Academies to demonstrate that they have had a real and lasting impact on standards. The signs are that they are doing just that.

In 2005, of the 14 Academies taking GCSEs, 10 saw rises on what they had achieved in 2004 and 12 had achieved results greater than that of the predecessor schools which they replaced. The average increase in results per Academy from 2004 to 2005 was 7.7 percentage points up to 36.4%. That is three times the national average increase of 2.6 percentage points. Provisional results from Academies for 2006 are showing a similarly strong level of increase.

All Academies have made increases in their KS3 results since opening. Academies reported striking improvements at Key Stage 3 in 2006 compared to 2005. Passes for 14-year-olds in English are up by over 8 percentage points, Maths by over 10 percentage points and Science by almost 13 percentage points. Academy results show some of the most rapid rates of improvement ever seen nationally.

Data reported by Academies suggests that they have achieved Science results six times better than the national average and results for Maths over three times better. The increases are significantly higher than the national average improvement for all schools in these subjects this year. This is evidence of the great progress Academies have made in a short time.

Capital City Academy in London is reporting a 27 percentage point increase in science, a 19 percentage point increase in maths and an 8 percentage point increase in English, turning around generations of underachievement.

Each Academy is unique – and so too is its sponsor. Because of the programme’s focus on the individual character of each Academy we are confident that the success of Academies will be sustained as the programme expands. As part of the Government’s Five Year Strategy we are committed to having at least 200 Academies open or in the pipeline by 2010. We are already ahead of this schedule. In March 2006 there were 100 projects open or in development – half way towards our target. Given the remarkable enthusiasm shown by existing and potential new sponsors, we are also confident that there will be many more sponsors with the values and commitment needed to realise our ambitions.

This prospectus explains the key elements of the programme and how sponsors can become engaged. But in truth, the best introduction is to visit an Academy, and feel the excitement and commitment towards excellence and social transformation which is driving the sponsors and the schools they have inspired.



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SPONSORS

Types of sponsors

Sponsors come from a wide range of backgrounds, including individual philanthropists, businesses, the charitable sector, community groups, faith communities, and existing private schools and educational foundations. Some are established educational providers, many bring a record of success in other enterprises which they are able to apply to their Academies in partnership with experienced school managers. We welcome this broad diversity, which is reflected in the character of the Academies being established. What unites sponsors is a commitment to educational excellence, and a capacity to bring it about.

Why involve sponsors?

Sponsors bring a commitment to the best possible education for students in their Academies. We believe that they have an important role in helping to turn around these schools. They bring a challenge to traditional thinking on how schools are run and what they should be like for students. sponsors bring fresh ideas. They also bring personal commitment, energy, drive and ambition. Above all, they bring a vision which inspires and motivates everyone involved – students, parents, staff and the community.

In return, sponsors know that they are providing something which will change and enhance the life chances of the pupils and, often, of the most deprived children. They also know they are putting something back into communities – often communities they know well – which may be struggling. A successful Academy will help regenerate and revive such communities.

The dedication and real excitement for education and change demonstrated by existing sponsors is infectious, and the best inspiration for those considering becoming sponsors themselves.

Sponsorship funds

Sponsors provide a £2 million charitable contribution typically to establish an endowment fund for the Academy. Sponsors can join together to provide smaller amounts of sponsorship as long as the overall sponsorship reaches £2m. This money is used over the lifetime of the Academy to fund activities which will focus on countering the educational impact of disadvantage and deprivation; and/or for educational work with the local community.

Alternatively sponsorship funds could be used to provide additional facilities or services, or for other innovative initiatives which fall within the remit of the Academy Trust's charitable purposes. Some sponsors may wish to endow their Academies with particular facilities, such as a library or business centre. This could be funded from investment income or, exceptionally, from the sponsorship principal, with the agreement of the Secretary of State.

Sponsorship is a welcome addition to the funding put in by the government. However, financial sponsorship is only one part of the contribution which sponsors make to the success of their Academies. More important is their vision, and the commitment which they and their networks and organisations make to the establishment, leadership and management of their Academies, in partnership with the communities they are to serve. The Academy Trust's endowment fund is designed to support the sponsors long term commitments and involvement with an Academy.

Support for sponsors

The Department for Education and Skills agrees the key characteristics, size, location, specialism, age-range etc with the sponsor and Local Authority (LA), and provides help in drawing up an 'expression of interest' with both parties establishing an Academy. If the Secretary of State approves this expression of interest the sponsor will receive funding to appoint a project manager and develop the education, curriculum, staffing, organisational and governance plans for the Academy, as well as setting up the Academy Trust which will run the Academy.

Once these plans have been agreed by the Department, the Academy Trust and the Secretary of State will sign the Funding Agreement – a binding commitment to establish the Academy. The sponsor will also sign a Deed of Gift setting out the terms and timing of the sponsorship donation.

In most cases it is expected that Academies will open in their existing buildings, where possible, and that their new or refurbished buildings will be provided by the LA within three years of the Academy opening. An educational adviser will be assigned to each Academy to support the development of the ethos and vision of each Academy as well as its educational and curriculum planning, and its leadership and staffing plans.

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) is a key partner in the Academies programme – building on its successful work in driving forward specialist schools. They offer support for new and existing sponsors including briefing them on all aspects of the programme and the support the SSAT can offer to Academies and Academies designate.

The Academy buildings will be provided mainly via the LA Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme – a Government programme to refurbish or replace all secondary schools in England over a 15 year period. BSF is managed by Partnerships for Schools (PFS) a non-departmental public body. If an Academy is agreed for an area which will not be part of the BSF programme for some years, the buildings will be constructed via a national framework also managed by PFS. The LA will run a procurement exercise to identify a private sector partner to deliver the buildings, and perhaps, a range of operation and maintenance services. The private sector partner will consult sponsors on the design and building of the Academy. The Department will provide support and advice to Academies during the development of their proposals on how ICT should be incorporated and provided by the Academy.

The endowment fund will give sponsors the ability to directly improve the lives of those children they sponsor, as well as more widely through their association with the school.

WHAT MAKES ACADEMIES DIFFERENT?

Academies:

- once established are independent of Local Authority (LA) challenge and support – though may, as set out above, engage with LAs and buy services from them if they want;
- have a wide range of specialisms or combination of specialisms e.g. science and the environment;
- have innovative approaches to leadership, governance, organisation, staffing and the curriculum;
- spread good practice and innovation throughout the system rather than being isolated centres of excellence;
- teach a broad and balanced curriculum;
- serve the local community in which they are established, including sharing their facilities with the community;
- work collaboratively with other schools, businesses and the local community;
- have innovative buildings with facilities which match the best in the maintained sector;
- are funded at a level comparable to other local schools with similar characteristics;
- are all ability schools and have admissions arrangements which comply with admissions law and the code of practice.

All Academies have at least one specialist centre of curriculum excellence, chosen by the sponsor and local authority in consultation with the local community to be served by the Academy. We encourage sponsors to think broadly about what specialisms would be appropriate for the circumstances of their Academy. Possible specialisms include business and enterprise, citizenship, performing arts, modern foreign languages, ICT or sport and science.

Academies are already making improvements in their academic results. All of the Academies have made increases in their KS3 results since opening. The overall percentage of Academy pupils achieving Level 5 or above is in English 59% (up 8 points from 51% in 2005); in Maths 64% (up 10 points from 54% in 2005) and Science 56% (up 12 points from 48% in 2005). Academies are improving at three times the national rate in maths and four times the national rate in science. They are also seeing a big improvement in English, bucking the national trend.

In GCSE English and maths Academies are improving faster than the national average, increasing from 13.6% of pupils gaining English and Maths as two of their good GCSEs in 2004, to 15.7% in 2005. This is an increase of 2.1 percentage points, against the national average of 1.7 percentage points.

Academies form part of local provision and serve their local areas, working with other schools, businesses and the community to provide education which meets the needs of the community. They also work with LAs to ensure a co-ordinated approach to admissions. This includes consulting the LA on their admissions arrangements each year, and complying with the code of practice which applies to all maintained schools.

Academies are inclusive schools and they must provide for pupils of different abilities who are drawn from the area in which the school is located. They do not select, but in some circumstances they can admit up to 10% of pupils on the basis of aptitude in certain specialisms.

SEN, EXCLUSION AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Arrangements for pupils with Special Educational Needs, excluded pupils and looked after children are in line with those in maintained schools. Many Academies also have specialist facilities or resources for pupils with Special Educational Needs. For example, Mossbourne Academy, Hackney provides specialist resources for pupils with autism; King's Academy, Middlesbrough provides for hearing and visually impaired children.

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HOW DO ACADEMIES HELP TO DRIVE SCHOOL INNOVATION?

Academies are at the forefront of educational innovation, in the provision of one or more specialisms, the content and delivery of the curriculum, the use of cutting edge ICT, and the development of new management and staffing structures.

Greig City Academy is providing students with the opportunity to study AS psychology by utilising video conferencing facilities provided by a distance learning service, supported by tutorials given by Academy staff.

At Walsall Academy the school day is organised into two sessions, 10 per week, in which students spend the whole morning or afternoon in a subject area.

At Kings Academy, arrangements are made for all students to experience the world of work. Sixth form students take part in a residential team building exercise and there are links with other local institutions so that the students can make appropriate choices for further study at the end of Year 11.

OFSTED Report Dec 2005

Academies' work with other schools and the wider community gives them an opportunity to show others what works and spread good practice throughout the system.

The Academies programme also provides excellent opportunities for Academies to develop innovative working relationships with independent schools, and to share knowledge and experience between the sectors. Similarly the Higher Education sector can make a significant contribution to Academies, either by co-sponsorship or through the development of close working links and partnerships.

The Kings School, Canterbury is contributing up to £250k per year sponsorship through shared curriculum materials, joint arts and community ventures and advice on a tutorial system to Folkestone Academy.

Manchester Academy and Lincoln Minster School are working together with three primary schools on a 'Building Bridges' project to support transition from KS2 to KS3.

Liverpool University is providing sponsorship in kind to the Liverpool North Academy in the form of staff and curriculum advice, support and development.

ACADEMIES RAISING STANDARDS

Academies raise standards by:

Creating a positive ethos and by focusing on learning. They ensure that students are offered a well planned curriculum which engages them and motivates them to be successful.

“The curriculum for the Years 7 to 11 is very good. It offers a balanced range of courses including a wide range of vocational subjects . . . The out-of-hours programme is strong, with a wide range of clubs, activities and educational visits. The balance of sports, music and drama is a good feature for the programme.”

The City Academy, Bristol OfSTED report 2005

“The curriculum has been developing really well. The taught curriculum is broad and balanced at Key Stages 3 and 4. The out-of-hours curriculum is excellent.”

Capital City Academy OfSTED report 2006

“The quality of the curriculum is good overall. There are two notable aspects of the broad and balanced curriculum in Key Stage 3: BITE, which combines ICT, business and enterprise; and the course in philosophy, theology and ethics (PTE). Both courses add challenge and variety to the curriculum.”

The King's Academy OfSTED report 2005

Organising for learning so that students' aspirations are raised and they receive high quality teaching;

"Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is usually lively; lessons are planned carefully and usually provide stimulating activities that challenge students to think for themselves. Good attention is paid to making sure that time is used profitably and that students work hard."

Walsall Academy OfSTED report 2005

"Good relationships and well established routines underpinned all the lessons, which were based on clear objectives and benefited from sound planning and organisation. Teachers gave clear explanations, aided by proficient use of interactive whiteboards, and insisted on attention from the students."

Manchester Academy OfSTED report 2005

"A significant proportion of the teaching is good and there is some outstanding practice . . . There are common and high expectations of the pupils' attitudes and a consistent approach to the management of behaviour, based on clear routines and good relationships between adults and pupils."

The Academy at Peckham OfSTED report 2006

"From the start, the academy placed as much emphasis on learning as teaching. The students are becoming good learners as a result of thoughtful approaches to developing their skills over time. The attitudes of good learners are discussed, illustrated and assessed regularly. This helps the students to build resilience and resourcefulness, and to take responsibility for their own learning."

The City Academy, Bristol OfSTED report 2005

Raising students' expectations through good learning and teaching so that examination and test results rise swiftly. Academies' results overall reflect the success of the programme:

"Academies are getting results – the average increase across all academies of pupils getting five good GCSE results is nearly 8%, outstripping the national average of 2.6%."

The Guardian Online 9 March 2006

Some of the shooting stars in the 2005 results at GCSE included Greig City Academy, which increased the numbers gaining five good GCSE grades by some 29 percentage points, from 25% in 2004 to 54%. The City Academy, Bristol increased its results by 19 percentage points, from 33% to 52% – its predecessor school scored 26% in its last year.

By creating exciting learning environments with new state of the art resources;

"The academy is already an effective school. It makes good use of its resources to successfully create an excellent teaching environment for its pupils in a very short period of time. There is a clear vision for the academy's future development, based on high expectations of achievement and attainment."

The City of London Academy OfSTED report 2005

"Sixth form students spoke positively about the friendly ethos of the Academy College, the good support that they receive and the very good resources in their chosen courses."

The Academy at Peckham OfSTED report 2006

"Resources, including impressive access to ICT facilities, are used cleverly to make key learning points to encourage students to think things out for themselves."

Walsall Academy OfSTED report 2005

PRICewaterhouseCOOPERS EVALUATION

PricewaterhouseCoopers is currently undertaking a longitudinal evaluation of the Academies Programme. Work began in 2002 and the final report is due in Autumn 2008. It seeks to discover which elements of the Programme are most effective, the cost of the elements and their sustainability in the long term. The findings are already being used to inform policy and will ensure that Academies continue to provide a radical option for raising standards in schools that have long failed their local communities.

The latest annual report was published in July 2006 and showed that Academies are making a real difference to our education system in the most deprived areas of the country. The report demonstrated that:

- Academies are improving results at a faster rate at the crucial Key Stage 3 than other schools facing similar challenges.
- Evidence shows strong leadership by principals, who are focused on raising pupil aspirations.
- The vast majority of pupils say their work has improved since joining an Academy.
- Absences at Academies have gone down by 1.7 percentage points, outstripping the national schools figure of 0.5 percentage points.
- 84 per cent of Academy pupils think 'the principal makes sure pupils behave well'.
- 82 per cent of Academy parents think 'the principal is really interested in how much our child learns at the Academy'.
- 82 per cent of pupils said they had good equipment to use in class and 90 per cent said using computers in lessons made work more interesting.
- Sponsors give good support to principals and parents and staff welcome the resources and expertise sponsors bring.

The fourth annual report will be published in the summer of 2007.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR SPONSORS

Q1 What will my role be?

Your role is to provide drive and ambition directly and through others. You will appoint the majority of the governors and with them lead the strategic direction of the Academy, offering challenge and support to the principal and senior management team.

Q2 What help will I get before and after the Academy opens and how long will it take to open the academy?

Each project is run by professional project managers appointed from a national framework set up and managed by the Department. The Department also provides a project lead to oversee and monitor the progress of the project and to ensure that proposals are developed in line with Government policy. Projects normally take 12 months from Funding Agreement stage to the Academy opening in the existing building. The provision of new buildings or the remodelling of existing ones will be carried out within three years of the Academy opening.

Q3 What is the role of the Local Authority in running the school?

The LA will have a member on the governing body and you will need to work with it on issues like admissions, but it will have no direct control in the running of the school. LAs will also procure design and construction services for the Academy building, and will ensure that it is delivered within the agreed funding envelope.

Q4 How does the Department fit in?

We provide advice and support throughout the process including managing the national framework for project managers. We also provide advice on the development of the Funding Agreement and agree that the Academy is ready to open. The running costs for the Academy are provided by the Department in line with the funding for maintained schools in the LA where the Academy is based.

Q5 What restrictions will there be on how I can run the Academy?

These will be set out in a Funding Agreement. The main restrictions concern admissions. Academies are also required to act in line with company and charity law.

Q6 Are there rules about the admission of pupils that the Academy would be expected to follow?

The Academy is required to follow the guidance in the Department's School Admissions Code of Practice and the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice which applies to all maintained schools.

Q7 Do I have the freedom to choose my own staff and governors?

In the main you may choose your staff, but where there is a predecessor school, Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) will apply. You will appoint the majority of the governors. One will be appointed by the Local Authority, one will be elected by staff and one elected by parents.

Q8 How much influence will I have over other things that will shape the Academy such as its specialism, ethos and uniform etc?

Issues of ethos, specialism and uniform are entirely for you. There are some requirements on the curriculum that you will need to meet largely to do with its breadth, inclusion of core subjects and testing. But the vast majority of the detail will be for you.

Q9 Will opening an Academy adversely affect other schools in the area?

Academies will be 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.

Q10 How will Academies be accountable to their local communities?

We want Academies to be at the heart of their communities, and expect them to be established in consultation with local stakeholders. The Department has been encouraged by the public response to the first Academies opening and the development of future Academies. Local interests are represented on the governing body.

Academies are local schools for local children. The governing body and the headteacher have responsibility for managing the Academy. Stakeholders including staff, parents and LA representatives, as well as the sponsor's nominees, make up the governing body. The governing body has a public duty to act in the interest of the Academy and not the sponsors. Their accountability is similar to many maintained schools.

Quotations:

"I would say as I look back at all the many things one has done in ones life, if I can make a success of this [Capital City Academy], it will be the most important thing I will have done in my life."

Sir Frank Lowe – Capital City Academy

"My commitment is to give children of Peckham a better opportunity in life. We have got to help those children, spend time with them and make sure they enjoy life and motivate them for the future."

Lord Harris – Peckham Academy

"What it [the Academies programme] has done for me is it has opened my eyes to the possibility really that can be achieved in education and it re-enforces what happens in business generally, which is it is about people and attitudes.

"The gratifying thing is that the impact on the community at large is huge and there is a great belief that things are possible now."

John Laycock – Bristol Academy

"I think this new school will be great for kids in Grimsby and I am really delighted to be able to help."

David Ross – proposed Academy project in North East Lincolnshire

"The key issue for us is improving the quality of life, the job opportunities, the qualifications of these young people and I am quite sure that they [Local Authorities] will get an immense satisfaction when they see these wonderful schools being built and what they are achieving I think is most remarkable."

Councillor Bill Thomas

"Any successful company needs a social responsibility, looking to put something back. When I looked round to see what we should do, it was fairly obvious that the biggest need was education, to give young people a better start in life, to give them the opportunity to be their best."

Sponsor

"People say 'It's a failing school, in an area I wouldn't want to send my children.' But they need to come and visit, see what's going on and how good the relationship is between staff and pupils. You almost want to move in yourself. To be in this environment is such an experience for the children."

Parent

"The change in the children and their behaviour to and from school is unbelievable and a credit to the staff."

Local Newspaper editor

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FURTHER INFORMATION

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