



Samworth Enterprise Academy

Case study



**Samworth
Enterprise Academy**

Principal
Pat Dubas

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Background

Samworth Enterprise Academy was Leicester's first Academy, and specialises in Business and Enterprise. It was built at a cost of £20 million on the site of the old Mary Linwood school.

It opened in 2007 as an all through school, accepting children from the age of three. In its first year, it took children up to Year 7. In September 2008 it welcomed Year eight students for the first time, and by 2011 will have filled its 1,046 places with three to 16-year-olds.

It replaces not only a failing school, but the traditional primary/secondary approach to education.

The Academy has two joint Academy sponsors – the Bishop of Lichfield and local businessman David Samworth. Uniquely, it also houses a parish church – St Christopher's Parish Church – within the school building, which has become a focal point for the local community.

The ethos of the school is firmly based on Christian values of caring for, and considering other people. However, it accepts and respects children of all faiths, and none.

A total of 51% of students at the Samworth Enterprise Academy have free school meals. A further 49% have special educational needs. There have been no permanent exclusions from the school.

All through education from nursery to sixth form

Like a small, but growing number of state schools, Samworth Enterprise Academy offers 'all through' education. Children start at the school aged three, and stay at the same school until they are 18.

It's an approach to education that is intended to eliminate any slump in motivation caused when students would normally change schools. It's also a model that helps the school to forge much closer bonds with students' families. And crucially, it instills aspiration and a desire for achievement from a very early age.

The Academy is structured in three phases – phase one is for Foundation Stage to Year 4, phase two is for Years 5 to 8, and phase three is for Years 9 to 11.

The curriculum is designed to promote literacy, numeracy and ICT, as well as key life skills. In addition, specialist teachers give Spanish, music, art, PE and food technology lessons from Year 1 upwards.

The school has also adopted a 'stage not age' approach, which means that gifted and talented children can progress at a rate that is right for them, while children who need extra help can get it.



At the heart of the community

At 7.30am, parents and children start to arrive at the Academy. Walking past the curved wooden fascia of St Christopher's Church, which is an integral part of the school, through the smart, electronically operated doors, they enter the school's sunlight restaurant where cheery green tables are decorated with vases of freshly cut yellow chrysanthemums.

It is a place where the families of students are made very welcome. They stay and chat to one another, have a bite to eat and let their toddlers play together.

They're surrounded by pieces of the children's artwork, neatly presented and named on the restaurant walls.

"The restaurant is the hub of the school," says Principal, Pat Dubas. "It's very important that parents feel they can come in and see what we're doing, that they feel a part of the school.

"We have a very close relationship with many of our parents, and they feel they can talk to members of staff without it being a big deal." Parents can even volunteer to become classroom assistants.

Posters throughout the school ask children to think about one another, and Pat has special certificates that are often awarded to pupils, including a Helping Hands Award, an Improvement Award, an Achievement Award, a Good Reading Award, and a Good Attitude Award.

There are pictures of star pupils on Pat's wall, including a self portrait of a youngster with learning difficulties who finds it hard to make friends. "Look," says Pat, "He's on Blu-Tac, so he can move his picture around to stand next to anyone he wants to."

Pat explains that learning at the Samworth Enterprise Academy is all about putting the child first, and finding the ways of learning that best suit the child.

There are a number of children at the school with unsettled home lives and learning and physical disabilities. They benefit from 'nurture classes' where they have daily contact with one teacher. Other children at the school benefit from 'gifted and talented' classes.

"We want every child to leave here having achieved the best that they could possibly achieve – to have the skills to go out into the workplace and succeed," says Pat.

As in many Academies, the leadership team and teaching staff are working to turn around years of poor attainment, and have great ambitions to pull levels of achievement and aspirations up.



OFSTED

Achievement and standards

OFSTED says: "The Academy has an effective system for tracking progress and reliable performance data for each pupil. This data shows that the progress of some targeted pupils in some areas was good and for some, outstanding. In addition, in some specialist subjects, pupils made good progress."

Personal development and well-being

OFSTED says: "The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall and good when provided with challenging tasks that engage their attention. Many are prepared to take greater responsibility when it is afforded them. On some occasions inappropriate behaviour develops where pupils are bored or are seeking to avoid a task they find difficult to access with some pupils behaving in an uncaring manner. However, the Academy has done well to maintain a low rate of exclusion. Attendance during the last academic year was above the national average."

Quality of provision

OFTSED says: "The quality of teaching and learning is currently satisfactory, with a good proportion of better teaching. Positive features of the best lessons are very good relationships and clear high expectations regarding both achievement and behaviour. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the pace of learning keeps pupils interested. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to articulate their thinking, and make good use of relevant practical, interesting activities."

"Pupils are very positive about the Academy and the opportunities it offers them to develop as young citizens. They speak positively about their future ambitions and the resources made available to them."

"The care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding. The Academy truly goes more than 'the extra mile' to remove barriers to learning. It works extremely hard to address the many and varied needs of the pupils. A range of adults work closely together to support different aspects of this area. This work is carried out in partnership with a significant number of external partners, pinpointed to give the best support for individual pupils. Staff and these colleagues work in partnership with parents and also provide support and training for parents."

Leadership and management

OFSTED says: "The Academy, to quote its own booklet One year on, 'has established a safe yet stimulating environment in which children can learn and extensive, sustained support for children and families'. Pupils' enjoyment and strong support for the Academy are the result of the dedication of the entire staff community."

External support

OFSTED says: "Partnership working is a key strength of the Academy and it takes full benefit from a range of very effective support provided by numerous other organisations. Liaison with the local further education college and higher education providers is being developed to support pupils' education and raise aspirations in the long term."

The people



Pat Dubas,
Principal

Teaching is at the heart of everything we do within the school. It's the key thing that allows us to deliver on a daily basis in order to make sure that our children learn as much as they can in order to achieve.

We like to think that within our Academy there's a very, very special ethos that we've created here. We're a Church of England school and obviously within that there's the Christian ethos. But it's much, much wider than that. It's about the way that we've engaged our community and our parents to get them to be part of our school. At the end of the day we believe that our parents and our community members have as much of a role in helping us to shape the lives our young people at school. And so we've opened up our school to everybody here. We make them very, very welcome. There isn't any day goes by when we don't have lots of parents, lots of people from the community, here in the school supporting us in everything that we do.

We take children from three to 16 years and that's a really good opportunity for us to get to know our children's needs and their learning needs, their level of attainment and everything that we need to know about them and their families. This enables us to make the most of the progression of their learning so that they can achieve the best they can.

Because we have children of the whole age range we also have teachers with different expertise and we very much work to bring the best of the primary working alongside the secondary specialist teachers together. This develops our teaching skills in order to make learning really fun and really engaging for our children.

Standards within the Academy are obviously very, very important – but it's a journey. We opened as a new Academy last year and we're in a community where there's huge disadvantage, but also some very bright and able children.

We have a very good attendance here. That's because we've worked hard at making sure children enjoy coming to school.

Uniform is really important because it gives us a uniform look across the Academy, and gives the children a sense of purpose and belonging. We've taken in schools where they didn't have uniforms before and we've got all our children from three, wearing school uniform on a daily basis, and portraying the image of the Academy. It's really important that we make the uniform affordable for our parents, and realistic, so they can sign up and be a part of our Academy.

Behaviour, obviously, is something that every school has to work very hard on, and we talk very much in terms of attitude. We have children who are working on specific programmes to help them to be included in the school community, either because of lack of boundaries, or because of their own special educational needs.

But equally, we've got children who are generally well behaved, who portray a very, very good image within the Academy and we're continually working with them to improve their overall attitudes and make sure that they see that's it's a continuum of learning development for everybody.

Children do show respect. They work hard on this and we are very, very clear with them, getting them to understand why certain things have to be improved and why we set particular expectations. They very much sign up to that, as long as they understand what we're expecting and why.

We've got so much to offer our children, but ultimately, our main aim is that every child achieves the best they can at school so that they achieve the most that they are capable of and they're able to go out into the community and to get those work opportunities, have high aspirations to achieve those, and to be good citizens and live good adult lives.

The people (cont.)



Caroline Whitty
Spokesperson for
Academy Sponsor
David Samworth

The Bishop of Leicester, Tim Stevens and David Samworth are equal Academy sponsors. Quite simply they wanted to get involved because they value this community and they wanted to make a difference and improve the life chances of children in this area.

David is a retired local businessman and he has a track record of supporting projects in communities where his businesses operate. He has made a very good living in the food manufacturing business, and he is committed to putting something back into these communities. In addition, David had a very good education himself, and he believes passionately in every child's right to a good education.

He was delighted to become involved in an education project with the Bishop of Leicester. They're very much on the same wavelength, and they have a shared vision.

His motivation was never about getting involved in the day to day running of the school. He realises the importance of leaving that to the educational experts. What he did want to do was to enable the creation of a new school. In reality he doesn't get involved in the day to day at all. It's much more about him being able to get involved in that original vision, and then it's up to Pat and her team and the governors to actually deliver that and breathe life into it.

He supported the choice of specialism and it is highly relevant to his food manufacturing business background.

It is David as an individual who is the Academy sponsor, however I think that because the business is so local it presents some fantastic opportunities to develop partnership working. Already one of the local businesses has proactively approached the school and is now involved in a number of different and innovative ways.

They supply the breakfast club with bread, they send in chefs to teach cookery skills, they're supporting a kick boxing after school club in line with our vision of healthy body, mind and spirit. And they also organise something called the 'S' Challenge – the Samworth Challenge – which was a cookery challenge for children and their parents which went down fantastically well. They had a day when they had to devise a menu and cook it together as a team – child and parent – and present it. There was a panel of judges who selected the winner. I am sure that the links with the business community will evolve. The most wonderful thing I think is how the kids respond to people from the business world being interested and wanting to come in and roll their sleeves up and get involved. The children have responded fantastically well to that, and that has been great to see.

I think that one of the things David definitely has provided, based on his business experience, is the importance of culture and ethos – the DNA of an organisation. We have incorporated a lot of the elements of the Samworth Brothers culture and ethos, which are very much focused on people, valuing people and letting people develop to their maximum potential. It's in the fabric of the way that we operate, and that's very much in line with the Christian values on which the ethos is based.

It's a local school for local children and is open to children of any faith, or indeed no faith. Actually, the Christian values are common sense. It's really about respect for others, love for others, forgiveness... it's really about treating others as you would like to be treated.

Every morning a lot of parents come in after they've dropped their children off and just meet for a chat and a coffee. They either just chat among themselves or have an opportunity to speak to members of staff. It's a way of welcoming families into the community, and we hope that that will evolve and grow.

The people (cont.)



Mollie, 13, Student at Samworth Enterprise Academy

Most children don't like coming to school but this is the best school you could go to. You enjoy coming to this school here more than anywhere else.

In business and enterprise at the moment we're making an advertisement for a project that we're going to make. We're making this phone that has internet and everything all in one.

The clubs I do are violin, basketball, netball, football and T&C, which is tea and computers so basically you just relax in the LRC with your friends and do your homework that you might need to catch up on. It's really relaxing. You just sit there with your friends and get away from home and everything.

My favourite class is drama because you can just jump around and you can do things that you're not allowed to do in other lessons. You express yourself loads.

At this school they focus on your future, and they give you high targets so if you can achieve your targets then you'll do well in the future. I'm achieving more than I did at my other school. At my old school I didn't enjoy any of the lessons really and I thought that I would not do well and that I would always not like it and I would not really listen because I didn't enjoy it. But at the Academy it's really fun so you do listen and you do learn more about all these subjects so you do get brainier!

My favourite subjects are Spanish and Drama. I know how to say "hello, how are you and what is your name?" I have two Spanish teachers and they're both Spanish. We do Spanish two days a week and it's really fun because we play games as well and it's not boring just sitting there. We learn with games and the interactive whiteboards, so it's really good.

When I'm older I want to be a TV presenter. Not children's TV or the news, that looks boring.

I love loads of things about the Academy. It's brand new, so you have loads of up-to-date things. The teachers are very nice. They're always solving problems. If you have a problem, it's very easy to find someone to solve the problem because there are so many teachers. You can just go and ask one of them and they'll just solve the problem straight away. I know some people who've got bullied and they go straight to teachers and they've sorted it out. You talk to the teachers like they're your friends – you can just have a chat with them. It feels like it's your friend at school, not your teacher.

The thing I like best about the Academy are probably the facilities – they're really up-to-date. And everywhere you can play, there's a massive field, a big playground, the multi-use games room and obviously the MUGA.



Liam, 12, Student

My favourite class is PE because I like doing sports. And I like ICT because I like technology and Spanish, because it's fun to learn about a second language, and the teacher, she doesn't do boring things, she does games with you as well to keep it in your head a bit more.

I like coming to the Academy. I like that you don't switch over to a different school, because that could be really disruptive. I like that you stay with your friends and the teachers you know.

I think my parents are quite surprised, because I like coming to school. Well, most of the time!



Anika Mhoda, General Subjects Teacher

I started at the Academy as a newly qualified teacher last year when the school first opened. Now I've moved into Year 7 with the "Nurture group" to help with the transition from primary school to secondary. I am a general subjects teacher and I support the children that have barriers to learning in secondary education.

The children I work with all come from different backgrounds. They have different abilities of work and different skills that they can contribute. Some have social and emotional barriers to learning at home which is why they're in the Nurture Group so that I can support them and they can still access the National Curriculum.

Barriers can be not having help with homework or having support at home from parents as much as they would like. Some of them come from broken families and come into school with emotional upset. Every day is different, but they can come in in the morning very upset, and it's about me having the relationship with the children to see that they are upset and make the time to talk to them about it so that we can deal with that. Then they can go to their lessons without it escalating throughout the day – something that's gone on at home that we might not know about. It's reading the signs and getting to know the children so that we know when something has upset them.

The people (cont.)



**Pauline Mitchell,
Parent**

I have two sons at the Academy. They're aged five and 11.

It's a fantastic school. I love the uniform. I think the uniform is so important. It's smart and it gives them a sense of pride and belonging. And it makes all children the same – there's no competition over wearing the best trainers or best designer clothes or anything like that.

The lessons are fabulous too. My eldest son achieved a grade five in his SATS for science and I was so proud of him. My youngest gets to play and take part in sport and cook – the facilities are so much better than normal primary schools.

They both do after school clubs – in football, table tennis and badminton, which is great. It's all part of the school's ethos of healthy mind, body and spirit. It's important to me that it's a faith school, that the children are taught moral standards.

They're happy, and I think that is what every parent wants for their child – and they're having fun so they don't even realise that they're working hard and improving. I really do feel confident that they're going to achieve to the best of their abilities.



**Richard Brucciani,
Chair of Governors**

I knew the two Academy sponsors and they asked if I would become Chair of the board of governors. It was a real opportunity to make a difference in the community here.

I think there are a whole bunch of things that are really important about this Academy. The first one is that it's the first major investment, and the biggest investment in this part of the city of Leicester. It is totally community centred, in the sense that it's geographically in the centre of the community and it works really well with the community. It's got a fantastic leadership and staff and teaching complement.

Most importantly, it cares very much for the pupils. Every single pupil is assessed, the needs of those pupils are assessed, and a programme that suits each of those pupils is put in place. And of course it has an ethos which allows pupils to become good citizens.



The people (cont.)



**John Simpson,
Assistant Principal,
Business and
Enterprise**

We chose the specialism of business and enterprise to support the kids in our catchment area. It's about giving them the skills they need in the workplace later in life to equip them for adaptation and change.

Business and enterprise is absolutely vital for children to learn about. When people leave school now they're doing jobs that didn't exist 15 years ago. So what we try to do is give children the entrepreneurial skills, the enterprise and business skills so that whatever they get into, they can adapt and use those skills in the workplace.

It's about giving students business and entrepreneurial skills. We look at it as enterprise, so it's teaching them to be enterprising in other ways – thinking for themselves, problem solving and taking responsibility.

We match what we're teaching to the age group. For some of our younger students, they haven't really got a concept of what business is, but we teach through really simple things. For example, if they're cooking something that they're going to sell to other students, we will get them to look at how much things cost and to budget for it. We also get them to think about enterprise in terms of charity. The students themselves have their own charity group, and they come up with ideas for the charities they want to support. They meet every other week with a member of staff and it's always led by the kids.

How we make business and enterprise interesting and relevant is by taking care not to focus too much on the theory. For the kids at our school, that's not going to interest them. We need to do things.

For example, I have groups of students at the moment who are working on producing their own advert. They are planning it, filming it, acting in it and editing it for TV. This is so effective with the kids as a means of learning because they're doing and they're learning through doing. Some of them will find the learning hard and are struggling, but as soon as there's an environment where they're safe, they can make mistakes and it doesn't matter, some of them will produce great pieces of work and they'll learn from that. And they'll learn skills that they can take out into the workplace when they do leave school.

Later on in the school, if we do have budding entrepreneurs, we'll encourage them and actually set businesses up. We'll support them in a safe environment so that if things do go wrong, we're there to hold their hands.

Getting them to do things is what's engaging the kids in learning.

At the moment we're in the middle of anti-bullying week and our Year one to four students, our really young students, have appeared in an anti-bullying DVD. The older students are designing a DVD cover for it, and we're going to use this to send around to other schools as an anti-bullying tool.

I want the children to leave here with good life skills so when they go out into the world they can tackle anything.



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