



400 Academies



**Prospectus for Sponsors
and Local Authorities**

department for
education and skills

Creating Opportunity
Releasing Potential
Achieving Excellence

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Mossbourne Academy

Mossbourne Academy is built on the site of Hackney Downs School, which was closed in 1995 as one of the worst schools in the country. The Academy serves the same diverse local community, which has high levels of deprivation – with over 40% of the students receiving free school meals, but the contrast between the two schools could not be greater.

Sponsored by local businessman, the late Sir Clive Bourne, Mossbourne opened in an award-winning new building in September 2004. Mossbourne's Principal, Sir Michael Wilshaw, is a National Leader of Education and trains other academy leaders.

The Academy is by any criteria a great success. When inspected by OFSTED in September 2006, it received a grade 1 (outstanding) on every single measure. Inspectors described themselves as "enthralled", and concluded that:

" Mossbourne Community Academy is an outstanding school because it achieves its mission... Within a very short time it has demonstrated that it is changing the lives of pupils for the better."

See: www.mossbourne.hackney.sch.uk

Why Academies?

Academies are all-ability independent state schools with a mission to transform education where the status quo is simply not good enough. They are established and managed by independent sponsors, and funded by the Government at a level comparable to other local schools. No fees are paid by parents.

By September 2007, there will be 82 Academies open in 51 local authorities, with a further 50 projected to open in September 2008. The sponsors include educational foundations, universities, philanthropists, businesses, private school trusts and the faith communities.

The Government is firmly committed to establishing 400 Academies. We regard the scaling up of the programme as a national imperative, supported by the recent independent report of the National Audit Office (NAO), the parliamentary watchdog, which concluded that Academies are “on track to deliver good value for money”, that they are “popular with parents and staff” and that they are improving educational attainment at a much faster rate than the national average.

Independent status is crucial in enabling Academies to succeed. Strong, ambitious leadership, effective management, high aspirations for all pupils and good teaching are essential ingredients in their success.

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

This prospectus is for potential Academy sponsors, local authorities and other partners. Given the remarkable enthusiasm shown by existing and potential sponsors and by local authorities, we are confident that 400 Academies are achievable, and that they will come to play a decisive and highly positive role in our national education system.

The prospectus explains the key elements of the programme and how sponsors, local authorities and other partners 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.

Transforming Educational Opportunity

The Academies programme targets areas of inadequate educational attainment and opportunity.

Some Academies are brand new schools in areas which need the extra school places. Most of them replace existing weak or underperforming schools. As a broad rule of thumb, the Government is prepared to consider any secondary school where in 2006 fewer than 30% of pupils gained five or more GCSEs at grades A* – C (including English and Maths) as a potential Academy project¹. In addition, local authorities should always consider an Academy as an option for dealing with a school in special measures, or subject to an improvement notice, whatever its results.

Evidence shows that Academies are bringing about strong and sustained improvements in pupil attainment and behaviour. They are also creating a culture shift in ethos and expectations. Where Academies replace highly challenging schools, it will inevitably take time to transform standards, but almost all Academies are demonstrating good year on year improvement.

On average, Academies have around three applications per place – an indicator of their early success.

¹ But see section on School Competitions for circumstances where Academies can be established irrespective of attainment. In the case of brand new schools, there is obviously no prior attainment threshold and Ministers decide on a case by case basis.

Key achievements: National Audit Office Executive Summary

- **Most Academies have made good progress in improving GCSE results and the programme is on track to deliver good value for money.**
- **Taking account of both pupils' personal circumstances and prior attainment, on average, Academies are improving performance at GCSE and national tests substantially better than other schools.**
- **Academies have high quality leadership and governance and improved teaching and learning.**
- **Academies admit higher proportions of deprived children than live in their immediate area, and nonetheless are improving at a faster rate than schools nationally.**
- **Academies are popular with parents and staff.**
- **Academy buildings are of good quality benefiting from a well-considered design process.**

See: www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/06-07/0607254.pdf

2006 GCSE results

- **The proportion of pupils getting five good GCSEs including English and Maths in Academies rose by 6.2 percentage points in one year – six times the national improvement rate.**
- **The proportion of pupils in Academies getting five or more good GCSE passes has doubled, compared to their predecessor schools five years ago (an increase from 21% to 42%).**

2006 Key Stage 3 test results

- **Academy test results rose by 8.1 percentage points in English, 9 percentage points in Maths and 10.5 percentage points in Science compared to previous validated results (nationally, Key Stage 3 results for all schools dropped by 1 percentage point in English, and rose 3 percentage points in Maths and 2 percentage points in Science).**

OFSTED reports

- **Nearly all the Academies open for three years or more have had full OFSTED inspections. One Academy – Mossbourne – has been graded as outstanding in every single respect. Four others have been graded as good, with a further 10 graded as satisfactory.**
- **Key to the future success of Academies is their leadership and management. On this indicator, two Academies have been graded outstanding, 10 good and three satisfactory.**

Capital City Academy, Brent

Capital City Academy is the hub of a very successful School Sports partnership comprising 29 primary schools, 3 special schools/units and 7 secondary schools. The quality of work done by the Academy, in support of this partnership, has enabled the partnership to exceed all the targets set by the Youth Sport Trust, including one of the highest improvements nationally in the amount of PE and sport undertaken by the students of the 39 schools. The Academy has been awarded a Sportsmark as a result.

See: www.capitalcityacademy.org

Collaboration

As well as transforming the life chances of pupils enrolled in them, Academies can help drive system-wide improvements through collaboration with other schools. Many established Academies have developed positive links with schools in their area and are keen to offer support to them, or to learn from them. Our expectation is for all Academies to work collaboratively with their neighbouring schools.

Leadership and project planning

The sponsor's vision and leadership are vital to each project, and the Department provides funding and support for the Academy project team once a project has been agreed in principle by Ministers. Partnerships for Schools, the Government's school buildings agency, manage the construction or refurbishment of Academy buildings in partnership with the Academy project team.

All-through schools

By September 2007, there will be nine all-through Academies – i.e. providing education for all ages from 3 to 19. All-through arrangements can enable Academies to transform standards at the primary stage, and tackle the disaffection often associated with transition from primary to secondary school. The Government will work with sponsors and local authorities to develop proposals where there is a local case for doing so.

Transforming Educational Opportunity

Subject specialisms

The specialist schools programme has demonstrated the positive effect that specialist centres of excellence can have on a school's performance. All Academies have at least one specialism.

Each sponsor agrees with the Department which specialism or specialisms their Academy will adopt. Sponsors and their principals are rightly focused on transforming achievement in English and Maths and other core curriculum subjects as their overriding priority. Normal practice is for at least one of an Academy's specialisms to be in a core curriculum area, for example Maths, Science or Modern Foreign Languages. Other common specialisms include Business and Enterprise and Sport. Many Academies have two specialisms, but this decision lies with the sponsors.

Most Academies have outstanding facilities, including improved sports facilities, ICT facilities and areas conducive to musical/theatrical performances. With or without a designated specialism, academies are able to develop excellent curricular and extra curricular provision in these areas.

Independent schools becoming Academies

High performing independent day schools are eligible to be considered for Academy status where they can increase the supply of high quality school places serving diverse communities. Two such schools have now become Academies – Belvedere School in Liverpool, and William Hulme Grammar School in Manchester. The Government would welcome other suitable independent schools wishing to join the programme on what is now called the "Belvedere model" (see "The Belvedere Academy" text box).

The Belvedere Academy, Liverpool

The Belvedere School in Liverpool transfers to Academy status in September 2007. The school is currently a fee-charging selective girls' school – with 100% of pupils gaining five or more A* – C GCSEs in 2006. The Belvedere Academy will continue to be governed and managed by the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), with the HSBC Global Education Trust. It will adopt "banded" admissions to ensure a full cross section of ability, recruiting from across Liverpool and beyond, with a larger academic 6th form and specialisms in Modern Foreign Languages and Science.

By 2011, Belvedere will cater for 800 pupils, including 250 in the sixth form, and will ultimately provide 380 more places than now, extending excellence and opportunity more widely in Liverpool.

"The Belvedere Academy will maintain and extend the tradition of high aspirations, an inclusive approach and excellent achievement and care which are the hallmarks of the current Belvedere School.

This is an exciting period for The Belvedere and one which I am sure marks the beginning of another successful chapter in the school's life. Above all we want to make a difference to the education and the lives of the young people of Liverpool and the wider community."

Barbara Harrison, Chief Executive of the GDST

See: www.gdst.net/belvedere/The_Belvedere_Academy.doc

In becoming an Academy, an independent school fully retains its independent management and ethos, and its high quality places are made available on a wider social basis without fees. Exclusively high-ability admissions are not permitted, but banded admissions arrangements – to ensure a full cross section of ability – are encouraged, together with a wide catchment area. We expect these Academies to remain outstandingly successful academically and we encourage them to expand their 6th forms so that their excellent A-level provision is more widely available.

Staying on beyond 16

Although post-16 participation rates have improved in recent years, among OECD countries the UK still has one of the lowest proportions of pupils in full time education or training at age 17.

In all, 44 out of the 47 existing Academies are – or will be – direct providers of post-16 education and Academies are proving successful in encouraging more pupils to stay on in education or training post-16. Within the local arrangements for delivering 14 – 19 specialised vocational diplomas, it is the norm for Academies to be post-16 providers in their own right. Where an Academy proposal does not include 6th form provision, the Government would need to be assured that arrangements for post-16 provision for pupils leaving the Academy are as good, in terms of accessibility and quality, as those which could be provided by the Academy itself.

Many Academies have universities either as sponsors or as partners, and defined progression routes to further and higher education are a key priority.

The City Academy, Bristol

The City Academy, Bristol, which opened in 2003 specialising in Sport, is sponsored jointly by John Laycock and the University of the West of England. In 2001, the predecessor school had only 22% of its pupils achieving five or more good GCSE passes. For the past two years, the City Academy, Bristol has raised this proportion to more than 50%.

The numbers of students staying on post-16 has also increased significantly, from 76% in 2004 to 93% in 2006, with successful higher education applications trebled in the same period (from 7 to 21). This year, 42 6th formers have applied to university – three times the number ever achieved by the predecessor school.

The Academy delivers a range of vocational options taken by all students across the 14 – 19 age range. 153 businesses are working alongside the Academy in delivering programmes that are based on “real life contexts”. This support includes mentoring support for every Key Stage 4 student.

The University of West of England provide two governors who together support the Academy with its self evaluation processes and ensure that practice is rigorously monitored at every stage of delivery.

See: www.cityacademybristol.co.uk

Sponsors

Sponsors come from a wide range of backgrounds, including universities, individual philanthropists, businesses, the charitable sector, existing private schools, educational foundations and the faith communities. Some are established educational providers, and all of them 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 of sponsors. What unites them is a passion for educational excellence and opportunity and a capacity to bring it about.

Sponsors challenge traditional thinking on how schools are run and what they should be like for students. They seek to make a complete break with cultures of low aspiration which afflict too many communities and their schools. We want this to happen, and it is why we entrust the governance of Academies to them.

In return, sponsors know that they are transforming life chances for the next generation. They are putting something back into communities – often communities they know well. A successful Academy will help regenerate and revive such communities.

“I was very impressed with the sponsor and his chief executive. I thought they had a real commitment to trying to invest in the young people...; it was about genuinely wanting to help young people in a deprived area and they have been wonderful to work with; very supportive, always there when the battles need to be fought but, equally, [they] respect the fact that educational professionals are here and they just get on with the job.

Academy principal

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

In the past, sponsors made a contribution towards the building costs of the Academy. However, in response to representations from sponsors, we have moved to an endowment model. Sponsors will, as the norm, establish an endowment fund worth £2m (or £1.5m for the fourth or subsequent Academy for sponsors of multiple Academies), with a minimum of £500,000 payable in the first year.

Payment of the endowment will normally be over five years. Sponsors can join together to provide smaller amounts of sponsorship as long as the overall sponsorship reaches the appropriate total sum. This endowment is used at the discretion of the Academy governors to fund activities over and above the core education provided by the Academy, which is funded entirely by the Government on the same basis as for other state schools in the locality.

A sponsor from the educational sector may bring value to an Academy project through their reputation and expertise in the educational field, but have more restricted access to charitable funding. In such circumstances, the Department may negotiate exceptional arrangements for an endowment to be built up.

Academy federations

There are many examples of improvements being brought about through successful schools working with weaker schools. These include formal federations, with a successful school in effect taking over a failing or a weak school. In converting to Academy status, it has become the norm for City Technology Colleges to take over the running of a weaker school or schools, to leverage their success more widely (see text box examples of Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy and the proposed Priory Lincolnshire School of Science and Technology Academy). A number of newer Academy trusts are following suit, and we encourage this.

The largest Academy federation is the United Learning Trust with 13 Academies in all (see "United Learning Trust" text box). There are now more than a dozen Academy sponsors with three or more Academies open or in development.

Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy

Knights Academy was opened in September 2005. Its predecessor school was Malory School which was consistently amongst the poorest performing schools in the London Borough of Lewisham.

The Academy is sponsored and managed by Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham Academy, also in Lewisham, which until September 2005 was a City Technology College (CTC) and one of the country's most successful state-funded schools. The two Academies share a governing body and come under the leadership of an Executive Principal – Dr Liz Sidwell, previously Principal of the CTC. Both schools have their own Principal and Senior Leadership Team and access all the experience and support that the Haberdashers bring to their many schools. There is a common curriculum, organisation and uniform across the two Academies, and the ethos and ambition of the former CTC extends to the Knights Academy.

The replication of the Haberdashers' "brand" has been successful. At Key Stage 3, 2006 results in core subjects at Knights show a dramatic improvement over previous validated results: with English up 20 percentage points to 53%; Maths up 10 percentage points to 44%; and Science up 20 percentage points to 43%. The Academy is now five times over-subscribed.

www.haaf.org.uk/k/kframe.htm

Sponsors

Priory Lincolnshire School of Science and Technology

A new Academy federation in Lincoln will build on the leadership and excellence of the Priory Lincolnshire School of Science and Technology (Priory LSST). The Priory LSST is already supporting the leadership of Joseph Ruston, a nearby low performing school, which has helped increase the school's GCSE results from 13% to 39% of pupils achieving five or more A* – C GCSE passes between 2004 and 2006. Another local school, the City of Lincoln, will also join the new Academy federation.

The Priory Trust will sponsor the federation with a principal for each Academy under a single chief executive and a single governing body. Pupils will be able to transfer between the Academies at all ages to pursue the courses and extra-curricular activities best suited to them. Teachers will be employed by the Trust and will also be able move between the Academies.

The Joseph Ruston Academy will also incorporate two of its feeder primary schools to cater for pupils aged 3 – 18. This will help to tackle low literacy and numeracy rates which currently affect attainment at GCSE and will help to prevent regression at age 11.

See: www.priorylsst.co.uk

We are looking to pilot new Academy federation models as part of the expansion to 400 Academies. These would involve a strong lead school working closely with a weaker partner school, sharing best practice and helping to raise standards and secure improvement. One model to be piloted will be for both schools to become Academies, joined by a single Academy Trust that helps to spread the successful ethos and organisation of the lead school. This model is very similar to the Haberdashers' Aske's Academies (see text box). Another innovative model that we wish to test will be for the lead school to become a Trust School and the partner school an Academy. Once again, the schools would share a single Trust that gives a common drive and ethos to both institutions. We believe that these collaborative models provide an additional opportunity for schools to work together towards the common purpose of improving standards and outcomes for every child. We will publish details of the pathfinder projects shortly.

Project development

Projects are normally identified and matched to suitable sponsors following direct discussions between the Office of the Schools Commissioner (OSC) at DfES and interested local authorities and potential sponsors. The Schools Commissioner, Sir Bruce Liddington, and his staff are happy to be approached directly by potential sponsors and local authority Directors of Children's Services ².

Once the Schools Commissioner is satisfied as to the viability of a project, an "Expression of Interest" from a sponsor or sponsors is put to Ministers. If Ministers are content to proceed, a feasibility phase is commenced, during which a project

² The Office of the Schools Commissioner can be contacted on 020 7925 6740 or by e-mail at schools.commissioner@dfes.gsi.gov.uk.

United Learning Trust

The United Learning Trust (ULT) is sponsor of 13 Academies. It is a subsidiary of the not-for-profit United Church Schools Trust, which is an educational charity that also runs and manages nine independent fee-paying schools. Its mission is to provide a high quality education within an ethos based on the Trust's founding Christian principles of respect, service and compassion, discipline and hard work.

The first ULT Academy opened in Manchester in September 2003. The ULT Academies work together as a group – and in collaboration with ULT's independent private schools – to the benefit of teachers, pupils and parents.

See: www.ult.org.uk

manager funded by the Department works with the sponsor(s) and/or their representative(s) to develop the detail of the Academy project and conduct a local consultation.

Once this feasibility project is completed successfully, the Department enters into a mutually binding "Funding Agreement" with the sponsor(s). This details the essential characteristics of the Academy, including size, location, specialism, admission arrangements, age-range and governance.

In many cases Academies open in the existing buildings of the schools they replace. The Department's aim is that new or refurbished buildings will be provided within three years of the Academy opening. The Academy Trust plays a decisive part in the development of the new buildings, in partnership with the Government's school buildings agency, Partnerships for Schools (see Buildings below) and the relevant local authority. Some sponsors also engage an educational adviser to support the development of the ethos, vision, leadership, staffing and curriculum of their Academy.

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 their principals and project teams.



Local Authorities & Academies

Academies exemplify the new role of local authorities as “commissioners” rather than “providers” of schools. Academies are run on an independent basis, which is critical to their success because of the absolute responsibility this accords their sponsors, principals and governing bodies for their management. There is no passing the buck or unclear lines of accountability. However, most Academies are, in effect, jointly commissioned by the DfES and the relevant local authority on a partnership basis. This includes agreement between the DfES, the local authority and the sponsor on the size, specialism and age range of the Academy; and other essential elements including admissions and provision for special educational needs. Academies are required to work within the Admissions Code of Practice.

Academies are not “maintained” by the local authority in the traditional manner, but are nonetheless part of the wider family of schools and other educational institutions in their area and we strongly encourage appropriate collaboration. By September 2007, more than one third of all local authorities will have at least one Academy in their area. In some local authorities – for example Hackney and Southwark – Academies comprise a high proportion of the secondary schools in the area and many local authorities now have multiple Academies, helping them to achieve diversity of educational provision to meet parental preferences. Academies play an important part in local authority planning for Building Schools for the Future, driving school improvement and reform alongside the provision of new or refurbished school buildings (see Buildings).

The “Manchester model”

Local authorities are increasingly becoming engaged in the strategic planning of multiple Academies in their localities. This is known as the “Manchester model”, after the agreement on an ambitious multi-Academy programme between Sir Richard Leese, leader of Manchester City Council, and Schools Minister Andrew Adonis in January 2007. The agreement will lead to the development of eight Academies in the city, six of them geared specifically to employment generation priorities for the city, with sponsors secured by Manchester City Council from each of these sectors. The Academies

are spread fairly evenly across the city, each of them to act as a “hub” for its specialist centre of excellence. Manchester City Council is underwriting the sponsorship and will establish a city-wide “Transforming Educational Outcomes Trust” – bringing together the lead sponsors and other partners, including Manchester’s universities. Each Academy is managed by its lead sponsor in the normal way (see “Manchester model” text box).

Other local authorities, including Birmingham, Sunderland, Hackney and Southwark, are adopting a similar approach to the development of Academies within their wider school rebuilding and transformational strategies. The Government is ready to engage with other local authorities which wish to consider similarly ambitious strategies for transforming educational standards and opportunity.

Birmingham Performing Arts and Technology Academy

The Academies programme, as a one-off, intends to open a school specialising in performing arts as part of Birmingham’s forthcoming multi-academy programme. In effect, this will be an extension of the model of provision developed by the BRIT School for Performing Arts and Technology (BRIT) in London. The BRIT School is a very successful and popular school. Birmingham’s Performing Arts and Technology Academy will be for 13 to 19 year olds who choose it because of their aptitude for the performing arts and its associated specialisms. The admission arrangements will draw pupils from a wider area than would normally be the case, and all of its pupils will be recruited on the basis of their aptitude and commitment to the performing arts. All other future Academies’ admission arrangements will comply with those applying in the maintained sector.

The “Manchester model”

Manchester City Council is engaged with the Government in plans for six new Academies across the City – strategically targeting underperforming schools in disadvantaged communities and forming part of wider programmes of regeneration.

The Manchester Academy model, developed in partnership, comprises:

- Academies specialising in the City’s six key industry employment growth sectors: health & bioscience; construction & the built environment; leisure, travel & tourism; finance & professional services; creative & media; and digital communications;
- local business leaders as Academy sponsors – drawn from each of the relevant employment sectors, including: BBC; Microsoft; ITV Granada; the Co-Operative Group; British Telecom; Bovis Lend Lease; Laing O’Rourke; Manchester Airport; and Central Manchester and Manchester Children’s University Hospital Trust. Each Academy will also benefit from support from Manchester College of Technology and Arts and the city’s universities; and
- a new ‘Transforming Educational Outcomes Trust’, bringing together the sponsors and other key local stakeholders in an innovative and creative forum for improving the quality of education and learning.

“The Academies will be at the heart of regenerating secondary education in the city thanks to the multi-academy model pioneered by Manchester.”

Sir Richard Leese,
leader of Manchester City Council

School Competitions



Academy sponsors are encouraged to enter the competitions now required under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 for most new and replacement schools. The purpose of the competitions is to ensure that new schools exhibit the highest standards and quality, and meet as fully as possible the diversity of pupil needs and parental preferences within each locality. The competitions are decided by the relevant local authority, unless the local authority itself enters a proposal in the competition, in which case the competition is decided by the independent Schools Adjudicator.

Sponsors may enter an Academy proposal in any competition, regardless of whether the normal standards criteria for an Academy apply. The decision maker must consider all proposals on their individual merits, having consulted the Department on whether it would be willing to enter into a funding agreement in the event of the Academy succeeding in the competition. The level of investment in the Academy would reflect local circumstances and the challenges faced.

Governance

In order to determine the ethos and leadership of the Academy, and ensure clear responsibility and accountability, the private sector or charitable sponsor always appoints the majority of the governors. This is the case even when a local authority is acting as a co-sponsor for wider purposes. The number of governors on an Academy governing body is not prescribed, but the expectation is for the body to be relatively small.

Like other state-funded schools, Academies also have stakeholder governors. They all have a parent governor, a local authority appointed governor, and the Academy Principal in an ex-officio capacity. Academies may also have a teacher governor (either elected or appointed); a staff governor (either elected or appointed) and may include community representatives.

The Academy governing body is accountable to the Secretary of State through the requirements of the Funding Agreement (FA). The FA requires the governing body to publish proceedings of its meetings. As charitable companies, Academies must prepare annual accounts for the Charity Commission, prepare an annual report for the Charity Commissioners, and ensure that accounts are independently audited.

There are many similarities between governing bodies of good local authority maintained schools and Academies, but there are important differences. As independent schools, Academies are set up as charitable companies to give sponsors and governors broader scope and responsibility for the ethos, strategic direction and leadership.

In Academies, governors have responsibility for:

- appointment of the Principal;
- employment of Academy staff;
- administration of the Academy's finances;
- authorisation of any appointments or changes to terms and conditions; and
- approval of the curriculum and personnel policies and procedures.

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

Academies must also set out their proposals for working with other schools and the wider community in their annual development plan.



Buildings

The Academy building programme forms an integral part of Building Schools for the Future (BSF).

This is the Government's major initiative to renew the entire secondary school estate across England over a 15 year period. BSF is managed by Partnerships for Schools – a non-departmental public body (see: www.p4s.org.uk).

The condition of school buildings varies, so BSF involves a combination of rebuilds and refurbishments, and Academies form part of this pattern. Over time, we expect the rebuild/refurbishment ratio for Academies to move into line with that of the BSF programme. The exact timing of the roll-out of BSF (and Academies) is subject to future public spending decisions.

An Academy might be proposed for an area where planned BSF works are some years from fruition. Where there are strong educational reasons to accelerate building work for an Academy, this can be done as a priority project within BSF. If an Academy is agreed for an area which will not be part of the BSF programme for some years, the buildings will be delivered via a special "national framework" for Academies set up by Partnerships for Schools. The process of procurement under this framework is managed by the sponsor, the local authority and Partnerships for Schools together.

Partnerships for Schools' (PFS) expertise in procurement and building is fully available to the Academy sponsors, and PFS has overall responsibility

for procuring all Academy buildings. This will maximise the value for money that the programme can deliver, and provide opportunities for sponsors to benefit from more cost-effective procurements and contract management best practice.

Often an Academy will open in its renewed buildings. However, some Academies begin life in predecessor school buildings in advance of a building project – in particular where there is an urgent educational need to bring in the Academy governance and leadership. In addition, some Academies will replace schools that have already been rebuilt or refurbished.

The expectation is that the Academy will be in new or refurbished building within three years of its opening, but there will be cases where it is appropriate for this period to be extended.

Providing access to the community is a core part of the Government's vision for extended schools. Academies are both raising standards for pupils and providing first class facilities for wider use in areas of particular deprivation, and the expectation is for all Academies to be extended schools.

On March 21, in his Budget Statement, the Chancellor announced the Comprehensive Spending Review settlement. This settlement allows the Department to continue to make good progress in rolling out the Academies programme. The Chancellor also announced that the Government would remove VAT constraints for current Academies and all those planned for the future. These changes will further strengthen the effectiveness and value for money of the Academies programme as it continues to move forward.

Copies of this publication can also be obtained from:

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Please quote ref: 00428-2007BKT-EN

ISBN: 1-84478-682-X

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Published by the Department for

Education and Skills

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