

# **Proposed Falmer Academy**

## **Ethos and Vision Draft Statement**

**September 2008**

My vision for the Academy is one which provides a new and different educational offer and which combines innovative teaching with modern technology and an inspiring environment providing opportunities that can break the cycle of underachievement in areas. I want to engage with you and the local community to help me make real my desires for the young people of Falmer.

I have chosen Entrepreneurship as the Academy's specialism which describes a state of mind which strives to solve problems rather than accept defeat. An entrepreneur has success, is not afraid of failing, remains positive throughout and will ultimately win through. All pupils will benefit from the specialism which will help instil in them a determination to succeed, to achieve high expectations and to become more responsible for the world they live in. I believe all pupils should have the entitlement to participate in entrepreneurial-related activity both within and beyond the formal curriculum.

The Academy will be at the heart of the Falmer community. We will be able to engage with the community in a number of ways and will encourage use by local small businesses, business start-ups, social enterprises, charities and community groups. We will also encourage local businesses to give advice to pupils wishing to start up their own business and will involve local volunteering organisations to promote volunteering opportunities within the community.

The Academy will have dedicated support for students with Special Educational Needs with a particular emphasis on Speech and Language development to enable full curriculum access. We will have specialist facilities for technology, sport, the expressive and performing arts, sciences, business and Information Communication Technology (ICT) and work-related learning. I am sincere in my desire to use different teaching and learning methods to develop a creative, energetic and imaginative atmosphere.

I am fully committed to bringing an Academy to my home town, an Academy with purposefully and imaginatively designed new buildings, with state-of-the-art facilities enabling a creative and innovative curriculum for the young people of Falmer. Through the specialisms of Entrepreneurship and Sport, we will provide a range of skills necessary for the workplace that will foster a sense of local pride. The Academy will very much be a partnership between the staff, pupils and parents, the wider community and our local partners. I truly believe it will be a focal point for the regeneration of this area of the city for years to come and I very much look forward to working with you to make my dream a reality.



Rod Aldridge  
Sponsor

Falmer Academy will serve a diverse community with complex needs. The Sponsor, Mr. Rodney Aldridge OBE, is one of Brighton and Hove's most successful entrepreneurs and a national leader of developments to support youth charities and activities. He will be the driving force behind the process to make the Academy happen and create energy and vision for the successful completion of an Academy that will be at the heart of the community, delivering educational, social and economic benefits for all.

The Academy aims to be an outstanding place of learning, organised for every students' success and happiness. It will introduce an innovative design for secondary education, aimed at transforming the students' learning experience and driving up achievement levels. The curriculum design and delivery, both academic and vocational, will be founded on recognised research and development as to how students learn best. It will prepare them for a rapidly changing world and meet the expectations required for 21st Century learning, enabling a step change in both learning and personal development.

### **ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The unique feature of the Academy will be the central importance of entrepreneurship, which will inspire all that the Academy does – leadership, learning and personal development. The Sponsor is passionate about giving young people the chance to unlock and maximise their potential in order to shape their own futures. Through an 'Entrepreneurial Centre of Excellence', the Academy will have a focus on promoting business and social enterprise activities. These activities will instil in young people a determination to succeed, to achieve high expectations and be able to take responsibility for themselves. Through social entrepreneurial activities, students will understand how they can influence the society and the world within which they are growing up. These activities will give them the skills to be able to make full use of every opportunity for personal and community benefit. The Entrepreneurial Centre will also be at the heart of the wider Falmer community, encouraging local businesses, business start-ups, charities and community groups to use its facilities.

The second specialism of Sport will complement the skills developed through entrepreneurship. Through the range of experiences that Sport offers, our students will learn how to be effective in competitive, creative and challenging situations within the academy community and beyond. The high quality, innovative and inspirational PE curriculum will also ensure our students understand the value of healthy, active lifestyles and develop healthy life style choices.

### **LEADERSHIP**

A key feature of the Academy will be to develop leadership at all levels. Both students and staff will develop an understanding of leadership qualities and how effective leaders make a difference to their organisations and communities. Through entrepreneurial and sporting activities and the 'intentional' teaching of a Core Skills curriculum, students will be able to develop and apply, to a variety of situations, their:

- leadership skills
- teamwork skills
- confidence to initiate
- sense of responsibility
- resilience to cope with adversity.

All staff will be encouraged and supported to develop high-level skills. The leadership team will ensure that a culture of teamwork pervades throughout the Academy and community partners. Staff will be given the opportunity to learn from each other and neighbouring schools and colleges, sharing materials, expertise and good practice. The leadership team will also ensure each member of staff is accountable for the success of their individual students and have high expectations of their own and their students' learning and development. Every member of staff will be valued for their contribution to the academy. They will be offered innovative career progression opportunities in order for them to be fully involved in the organisation and success of the academy and its students. The Academy will develop the skills and expertise of all staff through continuing professional development and a supportive performance management programme.

#### **THE ACADEMY AND THE COMMUNITY**

The Academy will provide the extensive and attractive range of opportunities that our students need to succeed and widen their horizons beyond their immediate neighbourhood. Partnerships with the local and wider community will be paramount in creating an Academy that will be at the heart of the community, offering a focus for supporting the learning of a wide range of its members. The aspirations and commitment of the whole community to life-long learning will be nurtured and developed. In particular, the Academy will work closely with:

- parents and families
- the Local Authority
- adult learner and community groups
- voluntary and statutory organisations, including youth and health organisations
- Brighton and Sussex Universities
- City College
- Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club and the Sussex County Cricket Club
- work based providers and trainers

to maximise extended learning and enrichment opportunities and support delivery of radical and transformational change and regeneration in the area. Partnerships will also ensure all students have access to available opportunities, support and services so that the Every Child's Matters agenda and Children's Plan is comprehensively covered.

The academy will ensure that its facilities are available for a wide range of adult education, leisure activities and community use and will be designed to be fully accessible to all, with access in the early morning, evenings, weekends and holiday periods. We will work in partnership with others to extend and stagger the school day, in order to facilitate personal and where possible, community learning needs.

The skills and talents of community members will be used as a resource for supporting teaching and learning, particularly in business, enterprise and sporting ventures. The Academy will also ensure it works collaboratively with all agencies, services and professionals to provide exceptional advice and guidance for students to make the appropriate and informed choices in their learning decisions and pathways. In particular, it will work with business industry professionals to help identify and review the key skills and aptitudes students need to contribute to the community, gain employment and be effective at work.

The Sponsor is committed to ensuring smooth transition from the Primary phase to the Academy. Together with its primary partner schools, the Academy will explore opportunities to introduce cross phase teaching, developing pedagogy, systems and materials that will support students during transition from key stage 2 to 3. Further transition points will not be solely focused on placement, but will also support the student to develop skills to shape their own learning journey, in preparation for adult life. Transition planning will be organised to ensure there are a range of people involved who will open up opportunities and support young people to realise their aspirations and ambitions.

Partnership with parent/carers and families will be vital to the success of our students. The Academy will build a sincere partnership structure with parents in order to ensure families are made fully aware of their child's successes and any problems they are facing. They will be enabled to contribute to their child's learning through termly meetings, robust data flow and the e-learning platform. Parent/carers knowledge and skills will be utilised to support the work of the Academy.

The Academy will be viewed as the centre for community support, with families accessing provision on site from a variety of agencies. Building on the innovative work of the Brighton & Hove Children and Young People's Trust, the Academy will support families in need by developing a coordinated and proactive approach, working closely with other agencies to develop communication systems, which are robust and effective. This will ensure students have swift and easy access to available opportunities and provision. All agency providers and youth organisations (statutory and voluntary) will be encouraged to work proactively within the Academy to develop and strengthen the student and family support capacity and systems. This will support other local and national initiatives aimed at helping vulnerable members of the community.

The Academy leadership team will be confident to commission services from other providers. They will ensure that the Academy will provide a comprehensive and full universal entitlement for all students, with commissioned services building on this, not necessarily substituting for it.

#### **STUDENT SUPPORT AND VOICE**

The Sponsor is committed to equality and inclusion and the Academy will create a values based environment, which will respect the worth, uniqueness, and dignity of all who study, work or visit there. All local children and their families, irrespective of ability, belief, gender or ethnicity will be welcomed by the Academy and encouraged to become an equal partner of the learning community, celebrating and taking pride in their own and others achievements.

Students will be able to access all learning, extended learning and enrichment opportunities regardless of any learning disability or cultural barriers. The Academy will expect all teachers to provide teaching that is planned to meet the diverse learning, social and cultural needs of their students and overcome potential barriers to learning.

Students will be empowered to have a resonant voice in the life and work of the Academy and wider community. The Sponsor will be able to bring his experience of working in partnership with young people to ensure their passions, beliefs, cares and interests guide all aspects of work. Programmes to support students in developing these skills will be implemented and will include the use of Student Councils, peer mentoring/

counselling and peer led implementation of behaviour protocols. Opportunities will be created for students to be involved in the organisation and running of the school, planning of teaching and learning and also the recruitment of staff.

Students will feel involved in their own learning and will be able to articulate how best they learn. They will be confident to give feedback to their teachers about the most successful teaching strategies for them. Over time, students will develop greater independence being able to manage and monitor their own learning programmes and learning decisions. The Academy will ensure there are Learning Mentors for each individual. Each student will have an Individual Learning Plan and Termly Learning Contract with regular feedback on their learning experiences. This will be underpinned by regular access to their Learning Mentor who will use appropriate data and intelligence to shape the learning journey, in partnership with the student, teacher and parent/carer.

Students will also be encouraged and supported to develop an emotional vocabulary in order to explain their feelings and beliefs, their views of right and wrong and make informed choices for healthy physical and moral lifestyles and decisions. Through the learning and pastoral curriculum and experiences, students at the Academy will become balanced, articulate people, who have a strong sense of self-worth and compassion for others. The Academy will ensure all teachers intentionally plan opportunities for students to practise and develop Core Learning Skills in subject areas and that they are competent at 'mentoring for learning'

The Academy will be organised for every student's success, with structures developed to ensure teachers' knowledge of individual students. Learning mentors and family support advisors will work with teaching teams to ensure all students know there is a supportive team around them, who understand their needs and will act swiftly to help them realise their hopes, dreams and aspirations.

The Academy will host the Swan Centre, which is a resource for ASD/Speech and Language support. The leadership team will use this opportunity to work in partnership with the Local Authority and health professionals to ensure the Academy develops a robust whole school speech, language and communication policy, which will be seen to be clearly effective within the Academy community. Systems will be in place to ensure collaborative practice becomes fundamental when supporting students with SEN or who are disabled.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The Academy will establish a reputation for high quality, innovative teaching, learning and assessment, embedding language, literacy, numeracy, ICT and employability skills. The rich and challenging skills based curriculum, personalised, flexible learning pathways and the specialism of entrepreneurship, will ensure all our students are equipped with the life-long skills needed to develop into confident and caring individuals, able to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. They will have the self-belief that will enable them to become successful learners who have a passion for learning, make excellent progress and are in control of their own learning decisions. All our students will be expected to carry on into higher education, employment or work-based training, enabling them to achieve economic well being.

The Key Stage Three and Four phases will be delivered over a period of time that will enable students to:

- gain a firm foundation in basic and core skills
- have sufficient time to devote to their accredited courses and qualifications
- take qualifications at the age when they are ready.

### **KS3**

The Key Stage Three Curriculum will be based in a discrete area, designed to encompass spaces to accommodate a variety of learning experiences and sympathetic to the Primary modes of delivery. This will ensure smooth transition to the Academy from the Primary phase. Students will follow the National Curriculum, building in the cross curricular dimensions according to learner and locality needs. There will be a strong foundation of the basic skills in literacy, numeracy, ICT and a World Language. High quality, world-class materials and resources that inspire and motivate students will support this. The Academy will fully embrace the personalisation agenda and ensure students can make connections, transfer and apply learning from one context to another and see their learning in a personal context. Further detail on the curriculum can be found in the Curriculum Statement as part of this overall Education Brief.

### **14-19**

At Key Stage 4 the Academy will work in partnership with the ‘Academic Corridor’ of Brighton and Hove to offer the full range of qualifications linked to current and future frameworks and meet the needs of learners in the community of Falmer. The Academy will become a centre of excellence in the development of academic and vocational routes to further and higher education and employment within the fields of the Academy’s specialisms, providing pathways at all levels. The Academy will give equal status to different learning routes and will work with Post 16 Curriculum Concordat to strive for recognition of these within the community. High quality advice and guidance for students will be provided from a range of professionals, signposting and supporting the varying learning routes.

A rich and varied programme of enrichment activities and extended learning opportunities will support the curriculum and extend students’ horizons beyond the immediate community. As well as the specialisms, the Academy will also place an emphasis on the expressive and performing arts, particularly music and dance. The Sponsor will be able to bring his extensive experience within the volunteering sector to support students and staff to engage in community based projects.

### **KS4**

Students will have the opportunity to personalise their curriculum through flexible grouping in the core subjects and a variety of pathways in the options. Work based learning will be a major feature of the Academy, preparing students to participate in the community and gain confidence in the world of work. A key feature of the provision will be exceptional careers advice from professional career consultants and the opportunity to work with local and national businesses. Extending links with Brighton and Sussex Universities will raise aspirations and support progression to foundation and full degree level programmes.

The Academy will act as an innovation hub in the expansion of the vocational curriculum at Key Stage 4. It will establish a centre of vocational excellence in entrepreneurship,

related subjects such as business studies, technology, mathematics, marketing and environmental issues.

### **KS5**

Students will be offered flexible and exciting opportunities through the Post 16 Concordat between the VIth form provision at the Academy, the skills centres serving the east and west of the city and the vocational facilities of City College. These opportunities will ensure that there are appropriate and attractive progression routes for Academy students at age 16. The Academy VIth form will include courses that complement the schools specialisms. The curriculum will also include programmes to develop personal effectiveness, specialist studies and sports leadership awards. A requirement for all post 16 students will be to engage in some form of accredited entrepreneurial activity, appropriate to each individual student.

Through our partnerships with the University of Brighton, the Academy will ensure it provides pathways into higher education. Students will be able to follow an accelerated curriculum, starting foundation degree courses whilst at the VIth form.

### **FACILITIES**

High quality, world-class technology will be integral to the learning, management and organisation of the academy, the realisation of the academy's vision and the development of an enterprise culture. An e-communication system, enabling students, staff and families to access learning and other resources will be developed. The learning platform will support the assessment *of* learning and assessment *for* learning. It will also support the development of teaching and learning plans and professional development plans within the Academy and with partner Primary Schools. Students will be able to access information systems from anywhere (home or academy) to support curriculum breadth and independent study/research. This will be available at most times of the day and week, supported by systems to ensure e-safety. Students will be able to track and review their learning and maximise personalisation. The Academy will use ICT to enhance home-school links, with a rich set of data available to families. Data on pupils' progress, linked to the information management system, will be used to reflect on the effectiveness of teaching arrangements and school organisation.

The design of the building will reflect the ethos, specialisms and learning environment of the Academy. It will be a state of the art facility and stimulating environment that everyone will be proud of. The building design will reflect the holistic, practical, experiential approach to learning and teaching. Corridors, public spaces, common areas and cafeterias will accommodate the requirements for social learning activities and be an equally powerful learning environment.

Falmer Academy will motivate and inspire the community and secure better life chances for all.