

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE

FROM: [REDACTED]
Head of Academies Policy Unit



DATE: 15 November 2006

CC: PS/Jim Knight
PS/Andrew Adonis
David Bell
Ralph Tabberer
Jon Thompson
Stephen Meek
Peter Houten
PS/Advisers

FUTURE OF ACADEMIES PROGRAMME

Issue

1. The Secretary of State asked for advice on possible new targets for numbers of Academies.

Recommendation

2. That the Secretary of State considers the argument below for a target significantly higher than 200 Academies open or in the pipeline by 2010.

Summary

3. We have an increasing amount of evidence that Academies are working; examination results are rising, OFSTED reports and the PwC evaluation are positive and parents are voting with their feet. Academies are playing a key role in delivering the Secretary of State's five priorities as set out in the Strategy Refresh.

4. We are already achieving a critical mass. Forty six Academies are now open and we expect to have around a further 100 in the pipeline by Easter 2007. By next September, we will have over 80 open Academies.

5. Based on our existing Academy criteria, the pool of potential schools has shrunk, but there is still a significant number of underperforming schools – in particular when taking into account performance in English and Maths. Provisional 2007 data show 807 schools with less than 30% of pupils achieving 5 good GCSEs including English and Maths. Many of these schools could benefit from Academy status. Not all of these schools are in deprived areas but, while we should retain a focus on deprivation, there is no reason not to use the Academy model to tackle educational failure in other areas. In addition, we now have some major, co-ordinated, authority-wide Academy programmes – such as in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

6. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We are developing new sources of sponsors (including universities and private school foundations) which we are confident will deliver high quality partners who can make a real difference. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Taken together, we are in an excellent position to increase the number of planned Academies.

Discussion

Progress towards current target

7. We are above trajectory towards our current target of 200 Academies open or in the pipeline by 2010. We now expect to have all 200 identified by next year and the vast majority – if not all – in the pipeline by the end of 2007. Similarly, we expect a much a higher proportion of the 200 to be open by 2010 than originally planned.

Contribution to the Secretary of State's Five Goals

8. The Secretary of State set out five clear priorities in the refresh of the Five Year Strategy. Academies play a key role across all five.

- *Closing the gap in educational attainment between those from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers.*
- *Continuing to raise standards for all across the educational system*
- *Increasing the proportion of young people staying on in education or training beyond the age of 16*
- *Reducing the number of young people on a path to failure in adult life; and*
- *Closing the skills gap at all levels*

9. Academies are transforming educational standards in areas of deprivation with a history of education failure. The experience of the CTCs shows that we can expect them – over time – to be much more than simply successful schools; but to be centres of excellence. In particular, the role CTCs are taking in taking over weak schools and converting them to Academies shows how powerful a contribution independent state schools can make.

10. In his speech to the Children's Services Network Conference David Bell said "My ambition is simple: I want every school to be a good school for every pupil". Academies can play a key role in delivering that ambition.

Academies are working

11. The debate about whether Academies work is being won. All the key indicators show Academies are delivering:

- *GCSE results* – provisional 2006 results show the proportion of Academy students getting five good GCSEs increased by 6.1 percentage points – the national average increase was 1.8 ppt; the rate of improvement was similar in 2005. All 21 Academies which had students taking GCSEs are above the floor target; 18 of the 24 predecessor schools they replaced were below.
- *Key Stage 3 results* - passes for 14-year-olds in English are up this year alone by over 8 percentage points (ppts), Maths by over 10 ppts and Science by almost 13 ppts. These are some of the most rapid rates of improvement ever seen nationally.
- *OFSTED* - 11 Academies have had full Ofsted inspections. One Academy – Mossbourne – has been graded as outstanding in every single respect. 3 others have been graded as good, with a further 6 graded as satisfactory. Only one has found to be inadequate. While it is still early days for the Academies programme for Ofsted to draw too many conclusions, this is a promising set of reports, particularly given the inheritance with which most of these Academies had to contend. Key to the future success of the Academies is their leadership and management. On this indicator, one Academy – Mossbourne again - is outstanding, 9 are good and one is satisfactory.
- *PWC evaluation* – among the positive findings from the latest PWC report is: four-fifths (81%) of pupils from brand new Academies thought that their school work had improved since joining the Academy, and (72%) from Academies which replaced weak and failing schools. Both are encouragingly high levels. There is clear evidence of strong leadership in most Academies, with positive feedback from Principals on the support provided to them by Sponsors. Three quarters of students surveyed thought the Principal of their Academy was “really good”.
- *Admissions* - There were three applications for each academy place this September. Almost all Academies were oversubscribed on opening and each year afterwards.
- *Social justice* – the NFER/LGA report on admissions published this summer found that Academies admit:
 - Higher proportions of pupils eligible for FSM than the proportion living in the local postcode districts
 - Higher proportions of pupils with SEN than the proportion living in the local postcode districts
 - A lower proportion of pupils of higher KS2 ability compared to the proportion living in the local postcode districts

Parents/community

12. The PWC report shows good examples both of parental involvement in Academies and of Academies engaging with their wider communities, including neighbouring schools.

Potential numbers

13.

14.

However, there are still a significant number of under-performing schools – in particular given the increased focus on performance in English and Maths. The provisional 2006 results show 807 schools with less than 30% of pupils getting five good GCSEs including English and Maths. Some of these are already in the Academies pipeline; for others closure may be the right option. But for others, becoming an Academy could transform standards.

15.

Pool of sponsors

16. Clearly, a potential restraint on increasing the numbers of Academies would be the availability of sponsors. However, we are just beginning to access new sources of sponsors – in particular Higher Education Institutions, the top end of the FE sector; and private schools – and these, plus our existing sources and multiple sponsors should provide a sufficient supply. We now have 12 multiple sponsors of three or more Academies each (open or in the pipeline)

[REDACTED]

17. [REDACTED]

Interrelationship with Trusts

18. Some concerns have been expressed that increasing the number of Academies might 'squeeze out' potential Trust Schools. However, there are strong reasons to be confident that this would not be the case. Firstly, even a significant increase in the number of Academies would only represent a minority of schools. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Across an Authority Academies and Trust Schools are not an either/or but together form a coherent strategy for delivering a diverse school system. And thirdly, Academy sponsors will – we think – also take on Trusts; with models such as an Academy at the hub of a network of Trust schools.

Costs

Capital

19. [REDACTED]

20. [REDACTED]

21. [REDACTED]



22. [Redacted]

Recurrent

23. [Redacted]

24. [Redacted]

Internal capacity

25. There are three basic stages in the Department's engagement with Academies; the initial brokering of projects (now carried out by the Office of the Schools

Commissioner); the development of those projects through Expressions of Interest, Feasibility and Implementation; and the long term relationship with open Academies. The capacity requirements for the first two are defined by the rate of flow of Academy projects, ie the number of new projects each year. The requirements for the relationship with open Academies is dependent on the overall number of Academies and their state of maturity (ie, on average we will need to give more support to Academies in their early years while they are still fragile institutions than in the longer term: this has been borne out by our experiences with CTCs).

26. In essence, however, we are confident that our current systems are scaleable, so that increased resources would allow us to deliver more Academies on the same model.

27.

[Redacted] 

From: [REDACTED] 

Sent: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] 

Cc: [REDACTED]
Conor Ryan
Subject: RE: ACADEMIES TARGET [UNCLASSIFIED] [Non-Record]

[REDACTED] 

Thanks. The Prime Minister will be saying:



Then there is the Academy programme with a full range of freedoms. Already 46 are open. The other 150 to meet our 2010 target are now being agreed. Demand is already outstripping the target. We are now confident we can double this number, taking it to 400. We will identify the additional schools soon and incorporate them into the Building Schools for the Future programme.

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED] 
Sent: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] 
Cc: [REDACTED]; Conor Ryan
Subject: RE: ACADEMIES TARGET

[REDACTED] 

Please see 2 page response to your letter of last night.

[REDACTED] 

[REDACTED] 

[REDACTED]
PPS / Alan Johnson

[REDACTED]

For latest news and information from Downing Street visit: <http://www.pm.gov.uk>

Help save paper - Do you need to print this email