

A Federation of Academies in south  
Gloucestershire

Between

The Ridings High school  
(Lead Educational sponsor)

and

King Edmund Community School

2008

**“Academies are all ability state schools with a mission to transform  
education”.**



King Edmund Community School



## What is an Academy?

Academies are **all ability state schools** with a mission to transform education. They operate independently from the Local Authority but are set up with its consent and collaborate closely with it and other schools in the area.

Academies should:

- Be positioned at the centre of their communities;
- Provide stimulating and fit for purpose learning environments;
- Define new forms of leadership and governance;
- Use the additional freedoms in order to improve the educational offer for students, and raise standards.

## Vision

This proposal seeks to create a **Federation of two independent Academies in South Gloucestershire** in order to raise standards and broaden educational opportunities for students at both institutions. This will be achieved by changing the status of **The Ridings High School** and **King Edmund Community School** from community schools to that of two independent Academies. **The Ridings High School will become the Lead Educational Sponsor** for King Edmund Community School. Both independent Academies will also be supported by sponsors from Higher Education, the Commercial and Industrial Sectors.

The Federation will bring together the two independent Academies in a context which is both innovative and unique. Both Academies will operate under an overarching **Executive Governing Body** and **Chief Executive Principal**, who will have responsibility for strategic direction and leadership. Each independent Academy **will retain its own Principal and Senior Management Team**. Both independent Academies can, with the agreement of the Executive Governing Body, constitute single Governor Committees to monitor the Academy Programme.

The Academies will have shared values, ethos and pedagogy and will benefit from each others resources and areas of expertise, expanding the breadth and depth of learning opportunities for students. **Complementary specialisms** will form the foundation upon which the Federation will deliver a broad curriculum relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. These specialisms will centre upon '**International Education**' at The Ridings High School and '**Vocational Education**' at King Edmund Community School. A specialism common to both Academies, will be ICT, in order to deliver an enhanced curriculum model.

## Invitation to Academy Federation Pathfinder School

In September 2007 the Director for Children and Young People (**DFCYP**) invited all South Gloucestershire Secondary School Headteachers to a briefing on

**Foundation, Trust and Academy Status** by officials from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Office of the Schools' Commissioner (OSC). For South Gloucestershire, the meeting with the DCSF and OSC was consistent with their vision to encourage **choice and diversity**.

As a result of this meeting, and discussions with the DFCYP, it was felt that The Ridings High School's concept of International Education and King Edmund Community School's vision for Vocational Education provided an opportunity for both schools, with the support of the Local Authority, to seek independent Academy Status.

In December 2007, the DFCYP received a letter from the Government (DCSF/OSC) inviting The Ridings High School and King Edmund Community School to participate in the **Federation Academy Pathfinder Programme (Statement of Intent)**. This Academy Pathfinder will consist of 10 schools throughout the country, and is therefore a great honour and privilege for both schools and the Local Authority to be invited.

Within the Federation Academy Pathfinder Programme, the Government has identified The Ridings High School as the Lead Educational Sponsor of King Edmund Community School. This means that **The Ridings High School will in collaboration with King Edmund Community School, take responsibility for initiating, developing and leading the Academy Process for both schools**, with the support of the Local Authority and the DCSF/OCS.

## *The Process*

The Federation Academy process is in four stages, following receipt of a formal invitation, (Statement of Intent). This forms **Stage 1** of the process.

The second stage (**Stage 2**) is the completion of an '**Expression of Interest**' (EoI) which should take approximately three months from receipt of the Statement of Intent. At this stage the DCSF will appoint their own consultant to work with both schools and the Local Authority. However it will be for The Ridings High School as the Lead Educational Sponsor to produce this key document. The EoI will need to demonstrate a rationale for the establishment of two new independent Academies within South Gloucestershire. The vision statement, a cornerstone of the EoI, although initiated and developed by The Ridings High School, will have significant input from King Edmund Community School and the Local Authority. **This vision statement will provide an insight into the future thinking and direction for both Academies.**

Following ministerial approval of the EoI, **Stage 3** of the Federation Academy Pathfinder Programme is initiated. At this stage a Feasibility Study is undertaken, lasting approximately 9 months. Within this stage, **the DCSF will appoint a Project Manager to ensure that the Feasibility Study process is adhered to** and that additional revenue funding is allocated for the purposes of initiating and developing the Feasibility Study. **The Feasibility Study enables both schools and the Local Authority to test the strategic concepts identified within the EoI for their**

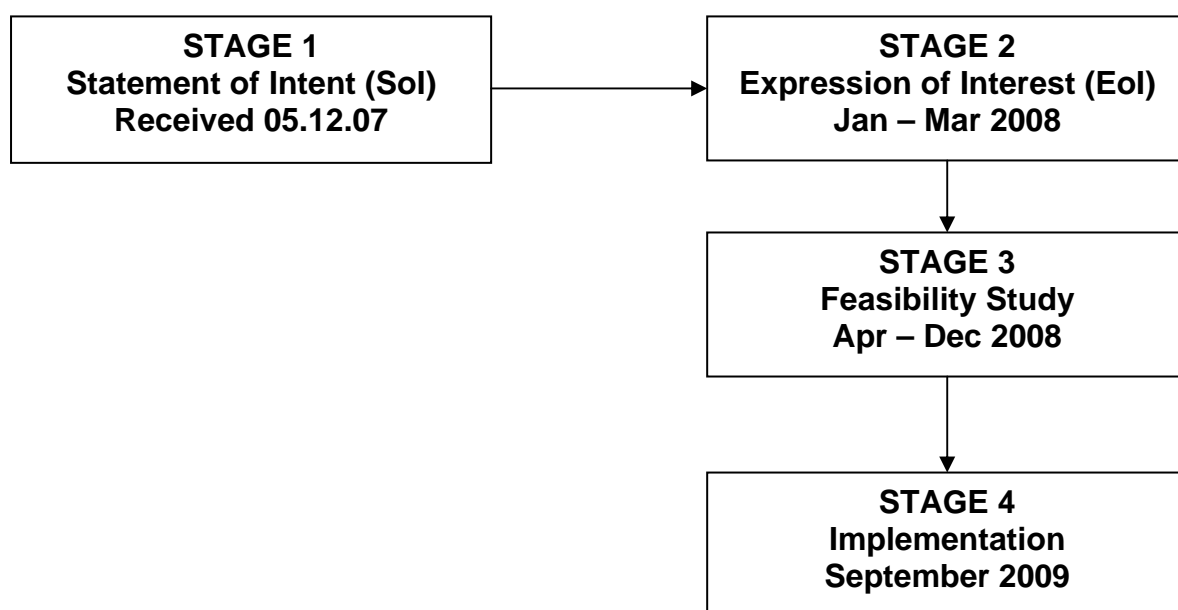
**practicality and application.** Within this stage, an **extensive consultation** will take place with the Governing Bodies, and **all key stakeholders**.

A number of areas will be explored and agreed, including **Admissions**, which will adhere to existing South Gloucestershire arrangements and continue to be part of the coordinated admissions process, the **SEN Code of Practice, Governance and Funding**. Also, issues as they relate to **Staffing**, especially the legal obligations associated with the transfer of staff (**TUPE**) to the new Academies. **To change status a legal technicality requires both community schools to ‘close’, in order to ‘re-open’ as independent Academies. This is standard practice within the Academy Programme.** The Local Authority’s freehold interest in the school site and buildings transfers without charge to the Federation.

Consideration will also be given, within the context of Building Schools for the Future (**BSF**), to issues as they relate to the refurbishment or rebuild of both Academies. Within the Federation Academy Pathfinder Programme, it is expected that any refurbishment or rebuild of The Ridings High School and King Edmund Community School will be completed within three years of opening as Academies. **This would result in a considerable move forward in the anticipated timing of any BSF rebuild for both schools under the existing schedule for South Gloucestershire.**

It is anticipated that the Feasibility Study will be completed by December 2008, when following further consultation with and approval by the respective Governing Bodies, both schools, with the support of the Local Authority, formally commit themselves to independent Academy Status.

Following ministerial approval, a Funding Agreement for each school will be drawn up between the DCSF, The Ridings High School and King Edmund Community School. **This agreement marks the formal contract into independent Academy Status**, commencing September 2009 (**Stage 4**).



## Benefits of the Federation Academy Pathfinder Programme

The benefits of the Federation Academy Pathfinder Programme are **to promote innovative approaches to raising standards, improving teaching and learning, and improving leadership**. This is to be achieved through:

- Creation of a strong and unique educational vision for the Federation;
- Futures thinking, including the implementation of new ideas and practices as they relate to teaching and learning, Governance and Academy organisation, **rooted in the sustainability of both independent Academies**;
- Both Academies within the Federation learning from each other and sharing good practice and resources;
- Curriculum freedom and coherent planning with access to more specialisms, including international qualifications and vocational courses;
- Coherent and focused support for Governance to sustain the aims, objectives and ethos of the Federated Academies;
- Raising student aspirations to Post-16 study and Higher Education;
- Coherent professional development for staff to improve teaching and learning;
- The Federation acting as a **Research and Development** base to test ideas, concepts and practices, for the benefit of its community and schools within South Gloucestershire;
- Each independent Academy acting as the hub for an enhanced **Extended Schools Programme** within the community it serves;
- Enhanced career opportunities for staff (teaching and support) within and beyond the Federation;
- Increasing **choice and diversity** within South Gloucestershire.

## Ofsted

The Academies Division at the DCSF has a team of advisers who work closely with Academies to monitor their progress and give support and advice. They will also appoint a School Improvement Partner (**SIP**) for both Academies. The DCSF has an agreement with Ofsted that they will carry out a monitoring inspection of new Academies, under Section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, in the 5th or 6th term of their existence and a full published Ofsted inspection within the third academic year.

## Summary

The concept of creating a Federation between two independent Academies in South Gloucestershire, supported by the Government, the Local Authority, Higher Education and Industry, provides a unique opportunity to develop and initiate an educational direction for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. With the raising of standards at the heart of this agenda, the benefits to students, irrespective of their ability or background, will be considerable.

Independence and curriculum freedom brings along with it considerable **responsibility** and **accountability** when **transforming education**. The sharing of the same ethos and values will form an integral part of the **sustainable vision** for the Federation of both independent Academies.

## Glossary

<b>Academy</b>	All ability state schools operating independently from the Local Authority, and set up with its consent to collaborate closely with it and other schools in the area. Its funding is received directly from the Government.
<b>DCSF</b>	Department for Children, Schools and Families
<b>Eoi</b>	Expression of Interest
<b>Feasibility Study</b>	Investigative timescale of approximately 9 months
<b>Federation</b>	A federation involves two or more schools with a joint Governing Body.
<b>OSC</b>	Office of the Schools' Commissioner
<b>Pathfinder</b>	Investigative process to test organisational and educational concepts, with a view to implementation.
<b>Project Manager</b>	Government appointed consultant to support Feasibility Study
<b>SIP</b>	School Improvement Partner
<b>Sol</b>	Statement of Intent

### **For further information regarding the Academy Programme:**

[www.nfer.ac.uk/emie](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/emie)

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/academies/>