



Department
for Education

Academies Annual Report

Academic Year: 2011/12

Academies Annual Report 2011/12

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1 Foreword by Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

When this government took office in May 2010, there were just 203 academies – previously underperforming schools given the freedom and the power to take control of their own destiny.

Within two months of the election, the Academies Act 2010 had made those same freedoms available to every single school in the country. Now, almost three years on, England’s educational landscape has been utterly transformed. All over the country, in every sort of neighbourhood, more than two million pupils are now being taught in an academy – and more schools are applying for academy status every day.

Since May 2010, 2,225 schools have converted to academy status, all of them pledged to help underperforming schools. Another 699 schools have opened as academies under the guidance of a strong sponsor, with a proven track record of tackling underperformance. In total, 59% of secondary schools across the country are now academies or in the pipeline.

This change is not restricted to secondary level – over 1,000 primary schools have become or are becoming academies, as well as 75 special schools and seven pupil referral units. The first alternative provision academy opened its doors in November 2012. 200 of the weakest primary schools are now sponsored academies, with the great leadership, support and external challenge they need to improve, and more outstanding sponsors are being matched with underperforming schools every day.

As well as converter and sponsored academies, entirely new academies are being set up all over the country. 81 free schools have been established so far, responding to parental demand for a greater choice of schools in their local area, and 211 are proposed to open. Five new university technical colleges are providing technical education that meets the needs of modern businesses and 16 studio schools are offering academic and vocational qualifications in partnership with local and national employers.

I am delighted to see so many schools, heads, governing bodies and teachers taking advantage of the autonomy and freedom offered by academy status. I am particularly pleased to see increasing numbers of schools converting in chains and clusters, working closely together to share expertise, offer support and exploit economies of scale. 28% of converter academies are now working together in over 260 chains. The fastest growing group of new academy sponsors are outstanding schools which have themselves converted in the last two years and now want to help other schools improve.

Evidence has already shown that the freedoms which academies enjoy – freedom over their school day and year, freedom over curriculum and workforce – translate into impressive improvements in pupil performance. In 2011 and 2012, the GCSE results of sponsored academies improved more quickly than in all other state-funded schools.¹ Many of these sponsored academies are working in particularly difficult circumstances – so these results are even more impressive. The Academies Commission report published in January 2013 rightly celebrates the “stunning successes among sponsored academies and academy chains in turning around underperforming schools.”²

¹ DfE (2013): *Attainment by Pupils in Academies 2012*

² The Academies Commission Report, ‘Unleashing Greatness: Getting the best from an academised system’ (2013)

But of course, no academy can afford to rest on its laurels. Like all other state-funded schools, academies are subject to Ofsted inspections and accountable for the achievement and attainment of the pupils in their care – and like all other schools, we expect academies to strive for continual and sustainable improvement.

This is the second annual report on academies. It covers the performance of academies during the 2011/12 academic year and honours a commitment we made to Parliament in the Academies Act 2010. The report sets out:

- background information on the academies programme;
- data showing the number, type and location of academies across the country;
- information on how academies use freedoms and flexibilities in order to raise standards in their schools;
- information on academy sponsors and on how academies work in partnership to promote professional development and improved teaching and learning;
- an analysis of the educational performance of the academies sector during the 2011/12 academic year;
- outcomes for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and eligible for free school meals (FSM) in academies, including an equalities impact assessment for the sector; and
- information on free schools, university technical colleges and studio schools.

I am delighted with the significant achievements of the academies programme so far, and I look forward to seeing the programme grow from strength to strength. By giving greater freedom and autonomy to schools, and driving up standards for all, the expansion of the academies programme ensures that every child from every background receives the best possible education.

Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Education

2 Purpose of this report

This report has been published to inform Parliament about developments in the academies programme. Section 11 of the Academies Act 2010 places a duty on the Secretary of State for Education to prepare, publish and lay before Parliament an annual report on academies, starting with the year beginning on 1 August 2011. The legislation requires the annual report to contain information on the academy arrangements entered into and the performance of academies during the year. In relation to performance, the annual report must contain information collected under regulations made under section 537 of the Education Act 1996 (under which academies must provide certain information to the Secretary of State) and under the contractual arrangements which academies enter into with the Secretary of State for Education.

This report gives information on the number of academies opened during the 2011/12 academic year, and reports on the educational performance of the sector as a whole during this period. It also gives the most recent data on the number of academies opened as of May 2013.

3 Background to the academies programme

Academies are independent state schools which are directly funded by the government. They provide greater freedom and flexibility to heads and teachers, promote innovation and diversity in the school system, and so help to raise educational standards across the board. Every academy is required to set up an academy trust which is an exempt charity and company limited by guarantee. Every academy trust enters into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education that sets out the requirements which apply to individual academies and the conditions to which the payment of grant is subject.

There are many different types of academies. Some academies have sponsors while other schools convert to become academies without a sponsor. Some academies operate in chain arrangements while others operate autonomously. The first academies were mainly underperforming secondary schools but under this government the programme has been opened to all secondary, primary, special schools, pupil referral units and post-16 institutions. Free schools, university technical colleges (UTCs) and studio schools are new academies which open in direct response to parental and employer demand and aim to drive up standards in the communities they serve.

The earliest academies opened in September 2002. Almost all had sponsors and were set up to eradicate underperformance in those secondary schools with a history of educational failure. There is clear evidence to show that the programme, with its benefits of greater autonomy, freedom and flexibility, as well as strong leadership and governance, leads to improved results and better outcomes for parents and pupils. Research by economists at the London School of Economics examined the performance of a sample of sponsored academies and comparator schools up to 2009/10 and concluded that moving to a more autonomous school structure through academy status generated “a significant improvement in pupil performance” and that this result was “strongest for the schools that have been academies for longer and for those that experienced the largest increase in their school autonomy”. The research also reported “significant improvements in the performance of pupils enrolled in neighbouring schools.”³

This government introduced legislation in 2010 to make it easier for all schools (including primary and special schools) to convert to become an academy. As a result:

- in May 2010 the government invited schools to consider converting to academy status and in June the government launched the free schools programme;
- in July 2010 all primary, secondary and special schools became eligible to apply to become academies;
- in September 2010 the first outstanding schools converted to academy status;
- in November 2010 the government announced it was inviting all good schools with outstanding features to convert. It also provided an opportunity for any school to convert, irrespective of Ofsted grade, if it joined an academy trust with an excellent school (outstanding or good with outstanding features), or an education partner with a strong record of improvement;

³ Machin, S. and Veroit, J. (2011) ‘Changing School Autonomy: Academy Schools and their Introduction to England’s Education’, LSE: Centre for the Economics of Education

- in January 2011 the government announced it was inviting applications from outstanding special schools to become academies with the first ones opening in September 2011;
- in September 2011 the first 24 free schools opened alongside one university technical college and three studio schools;
- in February 2012 the government announced it was inviting pupil referral units to register an interest in opening as alternative provision academies from September 2012 with the first one opening in November 2012; and
- in April 2012 provisions within the Education Act 2011 that allowed for the establishment of 16-19 academies commenced. In September 2012 the first 16-19 free school was opened.

The tables in section 4 show the steep increase in the number of schools which have become academies either independently or with a sponsor since the introduction of the Academies Act 2010.

In November 2012 the National Audit Office published a report looking at the expansion of the academies programme. It reported that the department has delivered a fundamental change in the nature of the academies programme through a rapid ten-fold increase in the number of academies since May 2010, adding that this increase is a significant achievement. The report also raised concerns about the financial implications of this rapid expansion, which the department has addressed.

Sponsored academies remain an essential part of the government's drive to raise standards and improve education opportunities for all pupils. In addition to the continuing focus on turning underperforming secondary schools into sponsored academies, excellent progress has been made by turning 200 of the worst performing primary schools into academies supported by a strong sponsor.

4 Data relating to the number, type and location of academies

The academies programme has expanded significantly under this government. Much of this expansion comes from schools converting to academy status through their own choice. The tables below set out:

1. The number of academies opened by year prior to the 2011/12 academic year.
2. The number of academies opened by month during the 2011/12 academic year.
3. The number of academies opened by month during the 2012/13 academic year to date.

Figure 1: The number of academies opened by year prior to the 2011/12 academic year.

	Number opened	Total open
2002/03	3	3
2003/04	9	12
2004/05	5	17
2005/06	10	27
2006/07	20	47
2007/08	36	83
2008/09	50	133
2009/10	70	203
2010/11	598	801

Source: *All open academies July 2012, DfE website*

Figure 2: The number of academies opened by month during the 2011/12 academic year.

	Number opened			Total open		
	Sponsored	Converter	All	Sponsored	Converter	All
August	0	300	300	272	829	1,101
September	45	152	197	317	981	1,298
October	0	50	50	317	1,031	1,348
November	0	69	69	317	1,100	1,417
December	0	44	44	317	1,144	1,461
January	16	50	66	333	1,194	1,527
February	2	49	51	335	1,243	1,578
March	0	55	55	335	1,298	1,633
April	17	121	138	352	1,419	1,771
May	2	29	31	354	1,448	1,802
June	7	62	69	361	1,510	1,871
July	4	77	81	365	1,587	1,952
2011/12	93	1,058	1,151	365	1,587	1,952

Source: *All open academies July 2012, DfE website*

Note: The 2011/12 academic year is taken as 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2012.

Figure 3: The number of academies opened by month during the 2012/13 academic year to date.

	Number opened			Total open		
	Sponsored	Converter	All	Sponsored	Converter	All
August	4	68	72	369	1,655	2,024
September	130	151	281	499	1,806	2,305
October	12	52	64	511	1,858	2,369
November	23	62	85	534	1,920	2,454
December	38	47	85	572	1,967	2,539
January	30	48	78	602	2,015	2,617
February	18	40	56	620	2,055	2,675
March	13	36	49	633	2,091	2,724
April	54	108	162	687	2,199	2,886
May	12	26	38	699	2,225	2,924

Source: *Edubase*

Note: The 2012/13 academic year is taken as 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013.

There were 1,151 academy funding agreements signed in the period from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2012. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of these figures for different types of academy. There were 1,952 open academies at 31 July 2012 of which 365 were sponsored and 1,587 were converters.

Figure 4: The number of academies by type and age range opened during, and by the end of, the 2011/12 academic year

	Number opened during 2011/12			Total open by end 2011/12		
	Sponsored	Converter	All	Sponsored	Converter	All
Primary	28	408	436	28	532	560
Secondary	63	614	667	334	1,019	1,353
All through	1	0	1	2	0	2
Special	1	36	37	1	36	37
Total	93	1,058	1,151	365	1,587	1,952

Source: *All open academies July 2012, DfE website*

Note: The 2011/12 academic year is taken as 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2012.

Academies are located across all regions of England and at 31 July 2012, 42% of state-funded mainstream secondary schools and 3% of state-funded mainstream primary schools were academies.

The map at figure 5 shows the percentage of state-funded mainstream secondary schools that were open as academies at 31 July 2012 by local authority area. In two local authority areas, Darlington and Rutland, all state-funded secondary schools were academies.

The map at figure 6 shows the percentage of state-funded mainstream primary schools that were open as academies at 31 July 2012 by local authority area. It shows Darlington had the highest concentration of primary schools (52%) open as academies. There were 54 local authorities with no primary academies.

Figure 5: The percentage of state-funded mainstream secondary schools that were open as academies as at 31 July 2012 by local authority

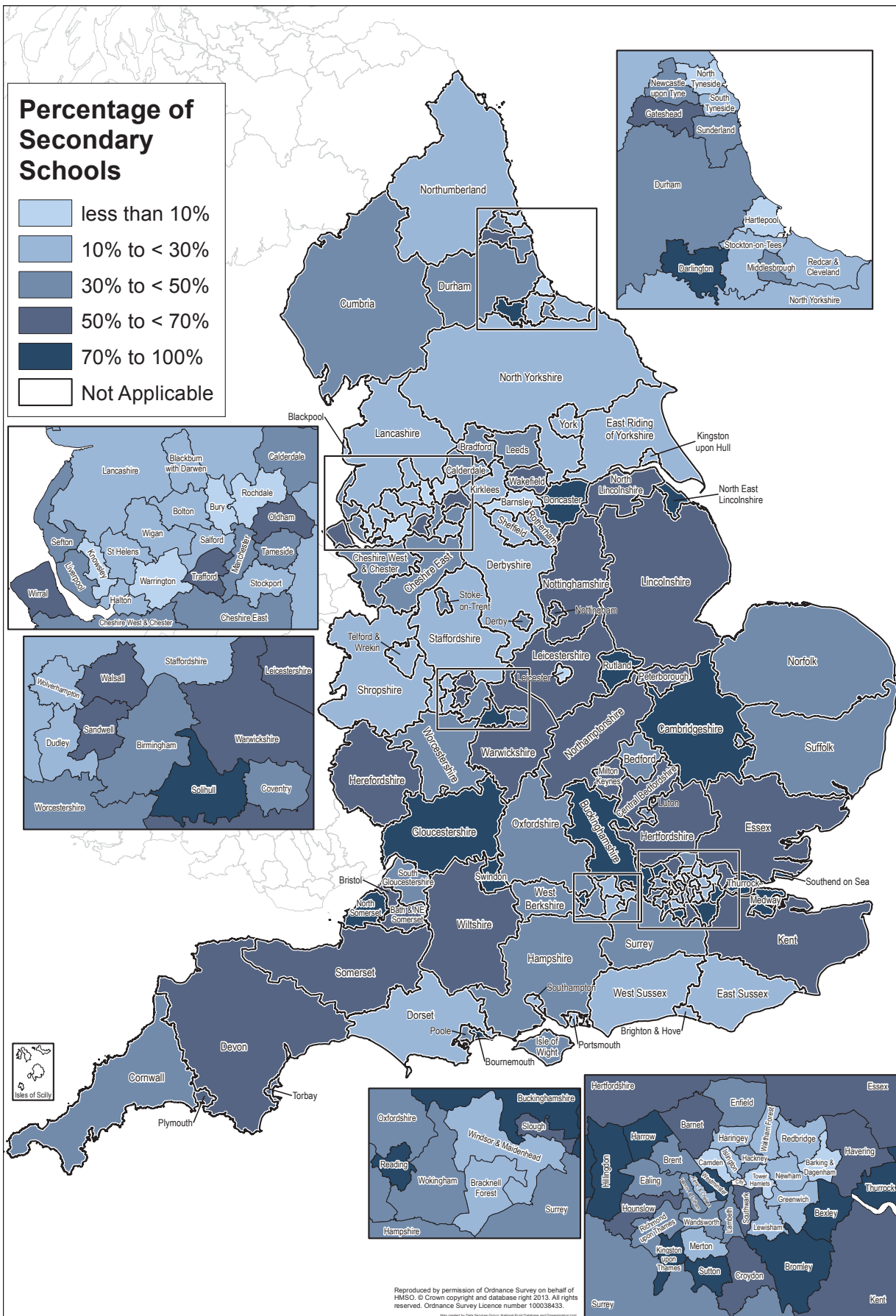
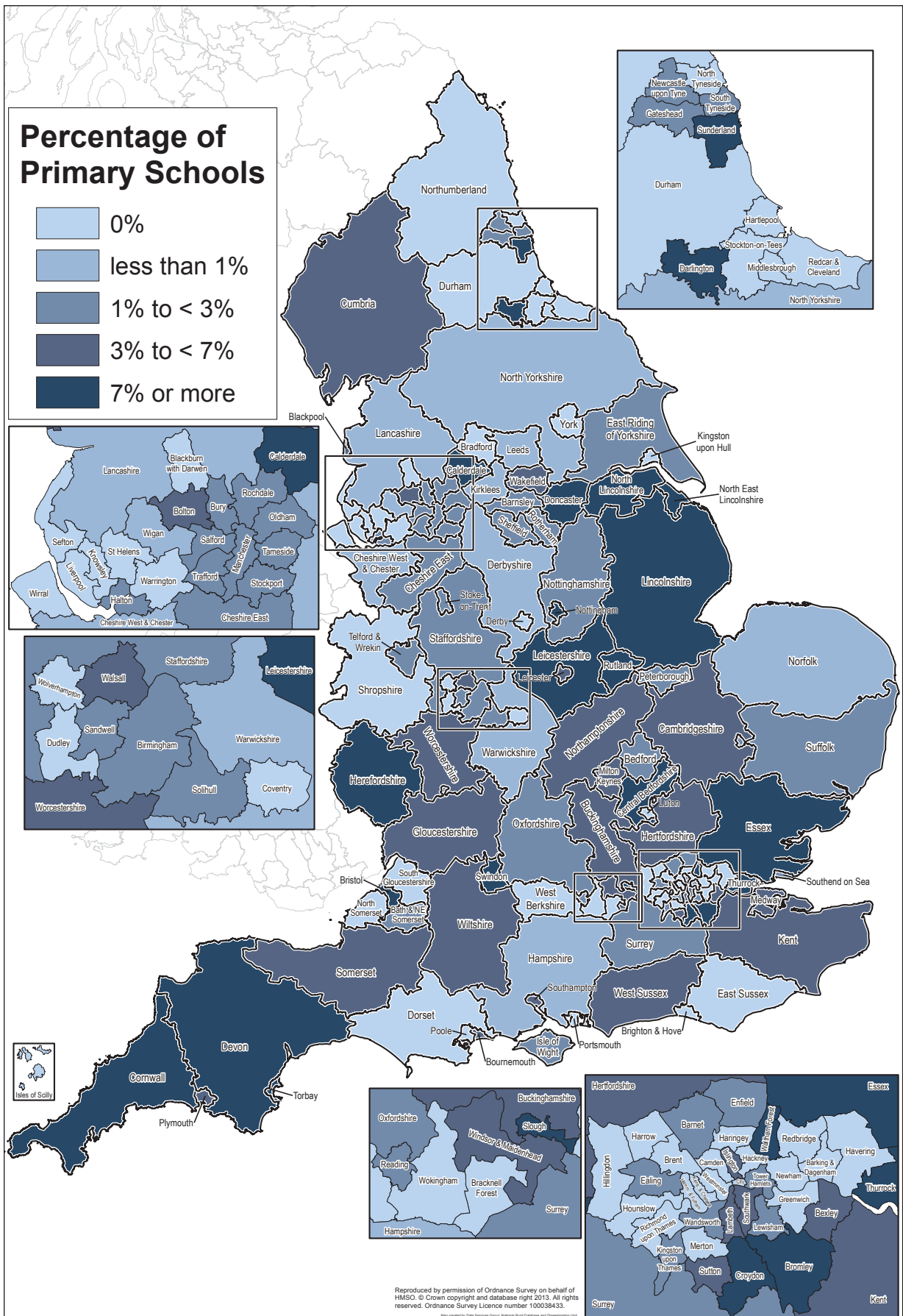


Figure 6: The percentage of state-funded mainstream primary schools that were open as academies as at 31 July 2012 by local authority.



5 Academy freedoms and flexibilities

Academies have the freedom and flexibility to teach, spend money and run activities in ways that specifically suit their local community of pupils, parents, staff and those working in partnership with the school. The greater freedoms and flexibilities that academies benefit from include:

- freedom from local authority control;
- the ability to set their own pay and conditions for staff;
- freedoms around the delivery of the curriculum (although academies are required to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, including English, maths, science and religious education, they are not legally required to use the national curriculum); and
- greater control of their budgets.

Academies are using these greater freedoms and flexibilities to help improve standards in their schools. Some examples are shown in the case studies below.

Case study – Mossbourne Community Academy

Mossbourne Community Academy in Hackney has used its freedom from the national curriculum to place greater emphasis on English, maths and science, with year 7 pupils being taught four hours of each subject a week rather than the standard two.

Although Mossbourne decided to continue using national pay scales, it recruits the best teachers it can by deviating from the national pay scale and awarding bonuses where it believes it is justified. All teaching staff are employed on a no hours contract.

The academy runs an extended school day with breakfast club starting at 08:00. The core school day runs from 08.30 until 15.10 and from then until 16.10 children attend extra timetabled classes depending upon their individual needs. Maths and English classes are timetabled for students that need extra help, while more able students are encouraged to learn a second, or for the exceptionally talented, a third language such as Latin. Year 11 study club runs four days a week from 15.10 until 17.10 for children most at risk of not achieving 5+ GCSE grades A* - C including English and maths. Sixth form lessons can run up to 17:10.

In 2010 Ofsted rated Mossbourne as outstanding saying: “even within that category it is exceptional.” In 2012, 89% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths, almost 30 percentage points above the national average and up from 82% in 2011.

Case study – Outwood Grange Academy

Outwood Grange Academy, near Wakefield, has used its academy freedoms to introduce a curriculum that is tailored to each student. Pupils are able to select an individual route and work at their own pace across a range of subjects, confident in the knowledge that their own route will lead them to further opportunities. Work based courses offer a more practical approach, while accelerated programmes enable some students to move more quickly to higher levels of academic study.

In addition to moving towards a more accessible and more flexible curriculum, vertical (mixed age) mentor groups have been developed to give students the opportunity to make valued and coherent choices, work as part of a unit and develop their life skills. Pupils from all year groups are included in each mentoring group. This mixing of ages leads to an increased sense of community, allowing for pupils to share experiences, foster understanding and reduce bullying. Structured and purposeful group sessions are delivered by training mentors and include activities such as peer mentoring, learning conversations and community cohesion.

The academy operates a 25 period, one week timetable with the facility to have whole day and half day teaching blocks in key stage 4 and 5. In addition to this they run an extensive range of enrichment activities at the end of the school day including: course work and study support, master classes, health and fitness education, internationalism, sports leader awards and coaching certificates.

In 2012, 82% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths.

Case study – Platanos College

Platanos College in Lambeth is in an area with high levels of deprivation, with almost 60% of children eligible for free school meals. Well over half of pupils speak English as a second language.

The academy has an innovative curriculum model for lower ability key stage 3 pupils, teaching them in smaller groups, using a primary model. Rather than being taught different subjects by different teachers and having to move around the school, they are taught by one teacher in one classroom, minimising disruption and aiding concentration. As a result, pupils achieve excellent results at key stage 4 (63% of low attainers achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths in 2012).

The enhanced financial flexibility that academy status provides has enabled the school to buy in additional services to support vulnerable groups, such as literacy programmes and study skills programmes, academic mentoring and a resident counsellor.

The school also runs a programme of accelerated learning for its most able pupils, and many children complete key stage 3 by the end of year 8, rather than year 9. This means that they can then take GCSEs in years 9 and 10, freeing up time to study additional courses and take extra vocational qualifications, such as accountancy or engineering.

In 2012, 80% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths, up from 68% in 2011.

Case study – Trinity Academy Halifax

Trinity Academy in Halifax has used its freedoms to set pay and conditions to recognise and reward its very best staff. So a teacher who is just a few years into their career, but has outstanding potential, can get a significant pay increase and be given a leadership opportunity that places them in a position where they can have the biggest impact across as many pupils as possible. This also allows the academy to spot potential of existing staff and develop them rapidly. The vast majority of staff responded positively to this and it has become part of the culture of the school.

Trinity Academy has also changed its term dates to break up the long autumn term. With the standard 14 to 15 week term, from early September to December, the headteacher had noticed a spike of poor behaviour in weeks 11 and 12 and a higher number of exclusions in school. To tackle this, the school decided to shorten the summer holiday to four weeks and then to have two weeks off in October. This approach has eradicated the spike in poor behaviour and exclusions. Less time away from learning in the summer also means that pupils regress less by the time they return to school than they would have done previously.

Trinity is operating a different curriculum at present, still teaching the main subjects within the national curriculum but with the introduction of vertical teaching and tutoring to ensure that pupils are receiving the right level of teaching. This means that three year groups are often taught together in the same class, enabling the most able pupils to be really stretched.

2012 saw Trinity achieve its best ever exam results and an outstanding progress judgement from Ofsted. The percentage of students achieving 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths rose to 66% in 2012, up 18 percentage points from the results of the predecessor school in 2010.

6 Partnerships and chains

There is strong evidence to show that being part of a formal chain can have a significant impact on a school's performance. Where weaker schools wish to become academies it is key that they are supported by a stronger school or sponsor and this can be achieved by joining or creating a chain.

Even where schools are strong enough to become academies independently, we would encourage them to convert in a chain or partnership. This can enable schools to support one another once they are academies, share resources, experience and ideas. Such an approach is particularly valuable to small primary schools where working together allows economies of scale to be achieved.

Any school that performs well and plans to become an academy already has to include plans to work with a weaker school on conversion to academy status and these plans can be strengthened by working with other schools in a more formal way.

There are three main models to enable academies to work collaboratively:

Multi-academy trust

The strongest and most formalised type of collaborative structure is the multi-academy trust model. Within a multi-academy trust all schools are governed by one trust and board of directors. By becoming one legal entity with one board, a multi-academy trust ensures there is a strong and clear collaborative link between the schools involved. There is a master funding agreement and a supplementary funding agreement for each academy between the multi-academy trust and the Secretary of State. If there is a lead sponsor they always have a majority on the multi-academy trust. There are currently 377 multi-academy trusts consisting of 1,201 academies, free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges.

Umbrella trust

The umbrella trust model allows schools of different types to set up their own individual academy trusts. The umbrella trust establishes an individual academy trust to run each academy and has majority or minority control over the individual academy trust. This is usually decided on the basis of school performance. This model allows them to work together while still retaining a certain level of independence and individuality. The individual academies, not the umbrella trust, are accountable to the Secretary of State. There are currently 38 umbrella trusts consisting of 142 academies, free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges.

Collaborative partnership

The collaborative or partnership model is a looser arrangement between schools. In this model the schools convert as single academy trusts and there is no shared trust or formalised governance structure as in the case of a multi-academy trust or umbrella trust. The schools can therefore determine the terms and formalities of any agreement to work together.

Case study - Northampton Primary Academy Trust Partnership

The Northampton Primary Academy Trust Partnership formed in November 2012 when five Northampton primary schools: Abington Vale, Ecton Brook, Headlands, Lings and Weston Favell joined together to form a multi-academy trust. These schools, an outstanding primary, an improving primary, a large split site primary, a Church of England primary and a foundation school all joined the Trust from very different backgrounds.

Teachers at the five schools are already getting many more opportunities to collaborate and share ideas with each other. The schools' senior leadership teams have also developed a new common teaching and learning policy.

The headteachers are finding that working so closely together is proving invaluable in helping the schools work towards their target of all five becoming good or outstanding in the near future. As part of this, all of the headteachers have committed to undertaking mini-Ofsted style inspections at each other's schools, so that each head is aware of how they need to improve and where their school needs to do things differently.

Being part of a multi-academy trust has enabled the schools to begin to streamline their back office operations. The schools have also worked together to get better deals for shared services such as new human resources and payroll providers. By pooling resources they have been able to buy in external literacy and numeracy support.

Each of the headteachers in the partnership has found that forming close ties with their peers in the other schools in the trust has been a key benefit of forming a multi-academy trust. Mark Currell, headteacher of Abington Vale said "joining together to provide support and to challenge each other to improve is opening up a whole range of possibilities to the schools, staff and pupils within the Trust".

7 Academy sponsors and underperformance

The government is committed to ensuring that every academy is of the highest quality. The first step in that journey is ensuring that academy sponsors are able to turn around underperforming schools quickly and sustain improvement in the long term.

Academy sponsors come from a range of backgrounds including those schools that have themselves converted to academy status, business leaders, educational charities, further education colleges and universities, grammar and independent schools and others. This mix of skills and experience is important in learning from other sectors and bringing the best of those experiences to academies.

There is a diverse range of sponsors across this spectrum. At the end of the 2011/12 academic year there were 471 approved academy sponsors. Of these, 161 were academy converters; 40 came from the business sector; 82 from the charitable sector; 40 from dioceses; 65 from the further education sector; 34 from the university sector; 13 were grammar schools, of which 10 are now academies; 13 were independent schools; two were special schools, and 21 were sponsors from other public bodies, including local authorities.

The government is keen to encourage high quality sponsors with the capacity and capability to turn around underperforming schools. We expect sponsors to have a strong track record and regular progress checks will identify those sponsors with the capacity to grow to become the strong academy chains of the future. Similarly, we will closely monitor growth to ensure sponsors only take on underperforming schools that we know have the capability to transform quickly.

Transforming underperforming schools into sponsored academies

Since 2002, academy status has been making a big difference in transforming underperforming secondary schools. Sponsors bring external support and challenge, and ensure academy freedoms are used for innovation and sustainable school improvement. In 2011/12 performance in sponsored academies improved at almost twice the rate of maintained schools.

The performance of sponsored academies is particularly impressive as they generally replaced historically underperforming schools in deprived areas, demonstrating in communities across the country that local socio-economic deprivation is no excuse for poor pupil outcomes.

There is a large body of evidence, both from pupil performance and independent reports, that shows the sponsored academy model is working.

Given the success of sponsored academies in tackling underperformance in secondary schools, the programme was extended in September 2011 to include primary schools. Primary schools were considered for sponsored academy status if they had experienced low pupil outcomes over a number of years and/or were judged by Ofsted to be inadequate, such as schools requiring special measures.

The department identified schools that met these criteria and began working with local authorities, governing bodies and both existing and new academy sponsors to develop, agree and deliver suitable sponsorship arrangements for the schools concerned. Although

working nationally, there was a particular focus on areas with a disproportionately high incidence of underperformance. The department also took steps to update the statutory Schools Causing Concern guidance on local authorities' and ministerial powers of intervention to address chronic underperformance and, where appropriate, expedite schools becoming sponsored academies.

The department had an ambition to turn 200 of the worst performing primary schools into sponsored academies – an ambition that was achieved on 1 January 2013. In terms of progress during the academic year, by August 2012, 31 primary, 340 secondary and one special academy had opened and a further 351 sponsored academy projects were approved for development, of which 277 were primary, 68 were secondary and six were special schools.

Case study – David Ross Education Trust

Established in 2007, the first academy in the trust was Havelock Academy in Grimsby. With the addition of its second academy, Malcolm Arnold Academy, in September 2010, the trust acquired multi-academy status. Since then a number of primary and secondary academies across the East Midlands, East of England and Yorkshire and Humberside have joined the trust.

By joining the David Ross Education Trust, sponsored by the David Ross Foundation, academies are given the opportunity to work across a wider network including joint phase working with primaries and secondaries. The trust operates in non-selective and selective local authorities and includes among its membership an outstanding special school.

In 2012, on average, the trust's secondary academies improved their performance of 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths by 9 percentage points. This includes Malcolm Arnold Academy which has seen an increase from 34% to 52% since 2010 and King Edward VI Academy which improved by over 30 percentage points in the last two years.

In addition to its strong educational focus the trust offers a strong programme of enrichment activities, supported through a range of partners including Peterhouse College, Cambridge, Uppingham and Millfield School, and the University of Nottingham. The academies also have the opportunity to work with elite athletes as part of the sports development programme. Pupils are supported on outward bound courses and there is also a scholarship scheme to nurture talent across a range of interests including music. The sponsor's vision is to build on the best of the independent sector within the academy group.

Underpinning this is a core team of dedicated educationalists and specialists in human resources, information technology, procurement and communications. Through the team the trust is able to offer its own in-house staff and governor training programmes.

Case study – Cabot Learning Federation

The Cabot Learning Federation is based in the south west of England and is sponsored by Rolls Royce PLC and the University of the West of England. The federation is made up of five primaries and six secondaries, making 11 academies in total.

The federation was set up in 2007 and has as its mission “collaboration for outstanding achievement”. Its core objectives are:

- to support all academies on their journey to sustained outstanding performance through partnership, support and collaboration;
- to develop, support and train staff so that they can be inspirational leaders, outstanding teachers, and excellent supporters of student learning; and
- to lead a sustainable future for the Cabot Learning Federation so that outstanding performance can be secured for future generations of students in the academies.

There is a strong emphasis on the workforce within the federation. Staff are all appointed to a central contract and have the chance to work in more than one academy which boosts their careers and professional development as well as sharing expertise with more children. Staff also have the opportunity to join the central school improvement team and be part of the school to school support programme. The federation was also designated as one of the first teaching schools in 2011 and this binds the school development and improvement priorities together.

The proportion of pupils in academies sponsored by the Cabot Learning Federation that achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and mathematics increased by 13 percentage points between 2009 and 2012. The two most recent academies to join the federation in 2011 saw a big increase in results in their first year. Forty five percent of pupils at Hans Price Academy achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths in 2012, up from 23% in 2011. At King’s Oak Academy, 51% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths in 2012, up from 32% in 2011.

8 Educational performance of the academies sector

Performance at key stage 2 and at key stage 4 of individual academies was published in the school performance tables in December 2012 and January 2013.⁴ For the purposes of the 2012 performance tables, academy status is taken as at 12 September 2011.

Performance of sponsored academies

Analysis published by the department shows that between 2011 and 2012 sponsored academies continued to drive up standards at a faster rate than other state-funded schools and faster than comparable local authority maintained schools at key stage 4.⁵ In sponsored academies the percentage of pupils who achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths increased by three percentage points. Across all state-funded schools there was an improvement of 0.6 percentage points and in a group of similar local authority schools the improvement was 1.5 percentage points.

Although results in sponsored academies still lag behind the national average – reflecting the fact that they are operating in challenging areas – on average, sponsored academies continued to narrow the gap. The gap between sponsored academies and other state-funded schools was also on average narrower for those sponsored academies that had been open the longest.

Among primary schools, it is still relatively early in the sponsored academy programme with only 31 sponsored academies having results for key stage 2 published in 2012 (and of these the majority were all-through academies). However, the data published in the performance tables does provide an early indication of the positive impact of academy status at primary level.

The proportion of pupils that achieved level 4 or above in reading and maths in sponsored academies improved at a faster rate than in all state-funded schools. In sponsored academies the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 or above in reading and maths increased by eight percentage points. This compares to an increase of five percentage points in all state-funded schools.

Performance of converter academies

A number of the schools that have chosen to convert to academy status are high performing schools, and the latest results show that they continue to perform above the national average for all state-funded schools. In the 680 converter academies open at September 2011, 68.4% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths. This compares to 59.8% in all state-funded mainstream schools. At key stage 5, the average point score per student in converter academies was 843.6, compared to 780.6 for all state-funded mainstream schools. The proportion of pupils achieving AAB or more passes at A-level in converter academies was 11.4%, compared to 8.6% in all state-funded mainstream schools.

Key stage 2 results for the 2011/12 academic year were published in December 2012 for those academies that were open on 12 September 2011. In the 254 mainstream primary

⁴ <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/index.html>

⁵ DfE (2013): Attainment by Pupils in Academies 2012

converter academies open at this point, 86% achieved level 4 or above in English and maths. This compares to 80% in all state-funded mainstream schools.

Performance of academy chains

Section six of this report gives information on partnership working and academy chain arrangements where outstanding academies support weaker schools to improve. Evidence shows that academy chains help raise standards and develop future leaders of the teaching profession. A 2011 report by the Public Accounts Committee said that “the sponsored academies see collaboration across chains or clusters of academies as the way forward which will help to further raise standards and develop future leaders.”⁶

The 2012 secondary school performance tables showed that some academy sponsors saw large improvements across their schools. Between 2010/11 and 2011/12, Oasis Community Learning academies saw an average improvement of 6.6 percentage points, United Learning 4.1 percentage points, Harris Federation 4.8 percentage points and Ormiston Academies Trust 4.9 percentage points in the proportion of pupils gaining 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths. Across all state-funded schools, the rate of improvement was 0.6 percentage points. In all but one of the Oasis academies, results improved at a faster rate than was seen amongst all state-funded schools, most notably the Oasis Academy Brightstowe which improved by 31 percentage points.

The National College for Teaching and Leadership found a link between membership of chains and academy performance, showing that academies in chains comprising three or more academies are improving faster than other academies.⁷ It showed that between 2008/09 and 2010/11 the proportion of pupils gaining 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths, increased by 15 percentage points in chains of three or more academies, compared with 12.2 and 11 percentage points for standalone and two-strong academy chains, respectively.

The Academies Commission report⁸ has said that “the introduction of academies has provided much needed vitality to the school system.” It goes on to say “there have been some stunning successes among individual sponsored academies and academy chains, and these have raised expectations of what can be achieved even in the most deprived areas.”

The 2012 annual report of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education⁹ highlighted that sponsor-led academies and particularly those part of a well-managed group or chain of schools can make a positive difference. Ofsted found that of the 204 inspected, 25% of those in chains were judged to be outstanding at the end of August 2012, compared with 8% not in chains. The report emphasises the importance of good and outstanding converter academies increasing support to improve other schools and the system as a whole.

⁶ Public Accounts Committee - Seventeenth Report - The Academies Programme, 19 January 2011

⁷ Hill, R. *et al* (2012) ‘The Growth of Academy Chains: Implications for Leaders and Leadership’, National College for School Leadership, Nottingham

⁸ The Academies Commission (2013). Unleashing Greatness. Getting the best from an academised system.

⁹ Ofsted (2012). The report of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills. Schools.

The early evidence relating to the performance of academy chains is encouraging. With the expansion of the academies programme, the government will continue to keep this evidence under close review.

Tackling underperformance

The government is determined to tackle underperformance as strongly in the academies sector as in other sectors.

In March 2011 the Secretary of State required the sponsors of all academies which were below the 2010 floor standard to provide plans setting out how they would make rapid and sustained improvements. Their progress has been closely monitored and challenged where the plans were not deemed strong enough by the Schools Commissioner. The government has made clear that if sponsors are unable to bring about transformational change for their pupils it will look to those academy sponsors with proven track records to provide assistance. Of the 39 secondary academies which were below the 2011 floor standard and received support and intervention, 26 improved to above the 2011 floor standard of 35% with 16 of these rising above the new 40% floor standard. The average improvement was 9.8 percentage points.

In the more severe instances, where there are concerns around the capability of a sponsor of an underperforming academy, the government will look to strengthen the academy trust or, where appropriate, would expect a change of sponsor or academy trust membership to be arranged. The Secretary of State can issue pre-warning letters to academies setting out his concerns with their performance and the action he expects them to take. Those academies issued with a pre-warning letter in 2011/12 saw significant increases in attainment in 2012. The proportion of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths improved on average by 16 percentage points.

9 How academies cater for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils

The government believes that academy status helps drive up standards for all pupils and is one of the most effective means of helping vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils achieve their full potential.

Special educational needs

Academies have continued to play their part in providing for children with special educational needs (SEN). Sponsored academies have a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than the average across all state-funded schools. In January 2012, 26.2% of pupils in sponsored secondary academies were identified as having some kind of SEN compared to 20.2% of pupils in all state-funded secondary schools.¹⁰ Over 300 converter and sponsored mainstream academies have reserved provision for pupils with SEN, i.e. provision reserved specifically for pupils with a particular type of SEN, such as a SEN unit. Reserved provision is an important element of the overall SEN provision within a local authority area.

Figure 7: Proportion of pupils with special educational needs by academy status, January 2012

	Number on roll	Pupils with statements of SEN		Pupils with SEN - School Action		Pupils with SEN - School Action Plus		Total pupils with SEN	
		Number	Incidence (%) ⁽³⁾	Number	Incidence (%) ⁽³⁾	Number	Incidence (%) ⁽³⁾	Number	Incidence (%) ⁽³⁾
Primary converter academy	109,845	1,450	1.3	11,130	10.1	6,110	5.6	18,690	17.0
Sponsor-led primary academy	1,670	15	1.0	270	16.3	135	8.1	425	25.4
Total primary academies	111,515	1,465	1.3	11,400	10.2	6,245	5.6	19,115	17.1
Secondary converter academy	938,500	16,150	1.7	96,825	10.3	46,925	5.0	159,900	17.0
Sponsor-led secondary academy	308,995	6,620	2.1	48,010	15.5	26,260	8.5	80,890	26.2
Total secondary academies	1,247,495	22,770	1.8	144,835	11.6	73,185	5.9	240,790	19.3
Special converter academies	1,795	1,790	99.6	0	0.0	10	0.4	1,795	100.0

Source: School Census

The government wants all schools, including special schools, to be able to benefit from academy freedoms. Special schools became eligible to apply for academy status in November 2010, with the first special academy conversion taking place on 1 September 2011, and the first sponsored special academy opening in April 2012. Special academies will play a key role within a diverse range of SEN provision, working with a wide range of educational providers including mainstream schools, and maintained, non-maintained and independent special schools. They are a key and vital part of the expanding academies programme and offer excellent education, support and care to many vulnerable young people. As at 1 January 2013, there were 59 open special academies (54 converters and 5

¹⁰ DfE: Special Educational Needs in England, January 2012

sponsored). Over 30 special academies are currently in development and expected to open before September 2013.

Special academies offer schools the opportunity to operate with greater freedom and autonomy; to take decisions in order to respond to the needs of children, young people and families; to become leaders in the field of special education; and to be recognised as a centre of expertise and innovation. They offer parents a greater choice of SEN provision so that they can choose the right school and learning pathway for their child, and a positive, helpful relationship with a school that is responsive to and supportive of the family's needs. Most importantly, they offer children and young people with SEN or disabilities a learning experience that is right for them and enables them to achieve and progress in school; high quality, motivated and committed teaching staff; and the support that will enable them to make the transition to adulthood and to live fulfilling and successful adult lives.

Case study – The Springfields Academy

Springfields is a special academy in Wiltshire with residential provision for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Many of its 80-plus pupils have been excluded from at least two schools and are troubled young people. Almost all have severe communication, behavioural or emotional difficulties and half have complex additional needs. The school has received an outstanding rating by Ofsted and in September 2011 became one of a first group of 12 special schools in England to gain academy status. In July 2012 Springfields was named the Overall 2012 Outstanding School of the Year and the Outstanding Special Needs School of the Year at the annual TES Schools Awards. The judges said: "Springfields is an extraordinary school, doing ground breaking work with its own pupils and also providing invaluable support to other schools."

The school's achievements stem from the inspirational leadership of Principal Trystan Williams and the quality of the relationships between staff and students. Mr Williams insists everything should be of outstanding quality from the care offered in the residential houses to teaching and learning opportunities available to students. He says "young people need a high-quality environment if they are to flourish" and believes that the residential houses is the key to changing behaviour. "I and my staff have full responsibility for them, not just for the curriculum, but for parenting as well."

In 2011 staff from Springfields took a group of pupils to the Arctic for "The Coldest Classroom on Earth" project. This summer they embarked on "The Hottest Classroom on Earth" expedition, a nine day trek across the floor of the Great Rift Valley and covering over 100 miles in temperatures of 40°C. Being able to work as a team and manage their behaviour enabled young people to gain confidence and increase self-esteem. These expeditions were followed by the BBC and viewed by millions across the globe. The next challenge, "The Highest Classroom on Earth" takes place to Everest in October 2013.

Case Study - Hornbeam Academy Trust

Brookfield House & William Morris schools in Waltham Forest formed a multi-academy trust in September 2012. Brookfield House Academy is a non-residential special school for pupils aged 2-16. It caters mainly for pupils with physical disabilities and/or complex medical needs and a small number of pupils with hearing impairment. The school manages a hospital and home teaching service for children in the local area and is also piloting the provision of specialist places for children aged two. The school was rated by Ofsted as

good in 2010, “providing excellent care, guidance and support, resulting in very good progress in pupils’ personal development.” It is now sponsoring William Morris School; a special school that provides for a wide range of SEN for children aged 11-19. The headteacher of Brookfield House became the executive head of William Morris after it was placed in special measures and he succeeded in bringing about improvements which has resulted in the school being removed from special measures a year later.

Pupils eligible for free school meals

The proportion of pupils in sponsored academies who are known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) is considerably higher than the average across all state-funded schools. In January 2012, 28.2% of pupils in sponsored academies were known to be eligible for FSM compared to 16% across all state-funded secondary schools.

Figure 8: Proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals by academy status, January 2012

	All pupils (3)			Pupils eligible for free school meals based on Performance Tables (3)(4)		
	Number on roll	Number of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals	Number on roll	Number of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals
Primary converter academy	109,845	14,305	13.0	104,230	14,190	13.6
Sponsor-led primary academy	1,670	675	40.4	1,615	660	41.0
Total primary academies	111,515	14,980	13.4	105,845	14,850	14.0
Secondary converter academy	938,500	86,135	9.2	778,810	79,140	10.2
Sponsor-led secondary academy	308,995	82,290	26.6	272,215	76,675	28.2
Total secondary academies	1,247,495	168,425	13.5	1,051,025	155,815	14.8
Special converter academies	1,795	550	30.7	1,670	520	31.1

Outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils

Section eight showed that, in 2012, sponsored academies improved at a faster rate than other state-funded schools and comparable local authority maintained schools and that converter academies continued to outperform other state-funded schools.

Analysis published by the Department for Education that breaks this down by pupil characteristics shows that:¹¹

- Results for FSM pupils and SEN pupils increased at a faster rate in sponsored academies than in all state-funded schools and a comparable group of local authority maintained schools. Key stage 4 results for FSM pupils in sponsored academies improved by 2.9 percentage points, compared to 1.7 percentage points for FSM pupils in all state-funded schools. Key stage 4 results for SEN pupils in sponsored academies improved by 2.6 percentage points, compared to 0.4 percentage points for SEN pupils in all state-funded schools.

¹¹ DfE (2013) “Attainment by pupils in academies 2012”

- Despite the fact that sponsored academies have usually replaced schools with a history of educational failure and are operating in more challenging circumstances, the proportion of pupils eligible for FSM who achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths in sponsored academies was similar to other state-funded schools, and for sponsored academies that had been open the longest the results were higher than similar pupils in all state-funded schools.
- The proportion of FSM pupils in converter academies who achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths was higher than similar pupils in all state-funded schools.
- Results for pupils with SEN were marginally higher in sponsored academies than those in comparable local authority maintained schools and those pupils who were in sponsored academies that had been open the longest outperformed similar pupils in other state funded schools.

Case study - Harris Academy, Bermondsey

Harris Academy in Bermondsey opened in September 2006. More than half of pupils (56%) count as being disadvantaged (eligible for free school meals or in local authority care for six months) compared to the national average of 14.7%. However in 2012, 58% of disadvantaged pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs in both English and maths, compared with the national average for disadvantaged pupils of 33%.

The academy runs a 'Mentors from Business' scheme where executives from top city companies mentor over 300 girls through weekly one-to-one meetings. The academy's curriculum provides the flexibility required to personalise the learning programme of each student. Every girl has an individual timetable, which is carefully constructed in consultation with parents or carers, subject teachers and external mentors.

Exclusions

Overall exclusion rates for academies continue to fall. In 2010/11 the average rate of permanent exclusions in sponsored academies was 0.26%; down from 0.32% in the previous year. Analysis previously published by the department shows that exclusion rates for sponsored academies and comparable local authority schools are similar.¹²

Exclusion data covering the 2011/12 academic year will be available in the July 2013 Statistical First Release.

New arrangements for school exclusions came into force in September 2012. The regulations and statutory guidance on exclusions now apply directly to academies, rather than via their funding agreements, supporting a consistent approach to exclusion across state-funded schools.

¹² DfE (2012) A profile of pupil exclusion in England.

10 Further analysis for academies sector

Equalities impact assessment

The department published an equality analysis for academies in May 2010 as the Academies Bill was going through Parliament. The evidence (in respect of sponsored academies) showed average attainment at the end of key stage 4 was improving at a faster rate in academies than the national average and also at a faster rate than a matched comparison group of similar schools (with similar attainment, history and intakes). Comparison with a group of schools (with similar intakes) showed that attainment for each ethnic group in academies was broadly in line with attainment of similar pupils in the comparison group of schools.

Ethnic group

Sponsored academies have higher proportions of minority ethnic pupils than the national average. In 2012, 73.3% of pupils in sponsored academies (open as at 31 July) were of white ethnic origin, compared to 79.8% across all state-funded secondary schools. This pattern was consistent for all the minority ethnic groups, with the biggest difference seen in the proportions of black pupils (8.5% in sponsored academies compared to 4.8% in state-funded schools). The proportion of each ethnic group in sponsored academies stayed broadly similar between 2011 and 2012, consistent with the national pattern.

Figure 9: The proportion of pupils by ethnic group

	All secondary sponsored academies open as at 31st July (1)		National average for state-funded secondary schools		244 secondary sponsored academies with results in 2011 and 2012 (2)		244 secondary similar schools (3)	
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
Asian	8.5	8.8	8.3	8.7	9.3	9.7	17.3	18.0
Black	8.0	8.5	4.6	4.8	9.0	9.4	8.5	8.5
Chinese	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3
Mixed	4.4	4.6	3.7	3.9	4.5	4.8	4.4	4.6
White	74.5	73.3	80.6	79.8	72.3	71.1	66.1	65.3
Any other ethnic group	2.1	2.2	1.3	1.3	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.3
Unclassified	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.0	0.9
All pupils	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: School Census

Notes: (1) Includes 2011 predecessor schools where necessary to maintain a consistent group. (2) Excludes sponsored Academies for whom no baseline 2010 were available. (3) Comparison schools matched based on their prior attainment, previous outcomes and levels of deprivation.

Results for minority ethnic pupils in sponsored academies improved faster, on average, than for such pupils nationally and in similar schools. For example, mixed race pupils in sponsored academies recorded a 5.7 percentage point improvement, compared to 2.8 percentage points in similar schools and 1.3 percentage points nationally. Although results

in sponsored academies across all ethnic groups still lag behind the national average, on average, sponsored academies continued to narrow the gap.

When compared to similar schools, sponsored academies showed higher results for all ethnic groups. Similar ethnic groups performed well in sponsored academies, similar schools and nationally, with Chinese and Asian pupils achieving the highest results on average.

Figure 10: The proportion of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths, by ethnic group

	244 sponsored academies with results in 2011 and 2012 ⁽¹⁾			244 similar Schools ⁽²⁾			National average		
	2011	2012	Change 11-12	2011	2012	Change 11-12	2011	2012	Change 11-12
Asian	53.1	55.8	2.7	55.0	55.6	0.6	61.8	62.7	0.9
Black	52.9	53.7	0.8	48.1	47.3	-0.8	54.3	54.6	0.3
Chinese ⁽³⁾	72.1	71.8	-0.3	75.8	66.9	-8.9	78.5	76.4	-2.1
Mixed	48.2	53.9	5.7	46.4	49.2	2.8	58.5	59.8	1.3
White	44.8	48.1	3.3	45.1	46.8	1.7	58.0	58.6	0.6
Any other ethnic group	47.6	51.8	4.2	43.1	46.2	3.2	54.0	56.0	2.0
Unclassified ⁽³⁾	41.4	47.4	6.0	39.2	46.2	7.0	56.3	58.5	2.2
All pupils	46.5	49.7	3.2	47.0	48.5	1.5	58.2	58.8	0.6

Source: National Pupil Database

Notes: (1) Excludes sponsored Academies for whom no baseline 2010 were available. (2) 244 comparison schools matched based on their prior attainment, previous outcomes and levels of deprivation. (3) Figures for Chinese and Unclassified pupils in Sponsored Academies and Similar Schools should be treated with caution due to relatively small numbers.

Gender

The gender split in sponsored academies is largely in line with the national average, although they show a marginally higher proportion of boys than the national average for state-funded secondary schools (51.8% for sponsored academies open as at 31 July 2011, compared to 50.4% nationally). The proportions of each gender in sponsored academies stayed constant between 2011 and 2012.

The group of 244 sponsored academies, and the group of similar schools, had a higher proportion of boys than the national average. The group of similar schools had a slightly higher proportion of boys than the group of sponsored academies.

Figure 11: The proportion of pupils by gender

	All secondary sponsored academies open as at 31 July ⁽¹⁾		National average for state-funded secondary schools		244 secondary sponsored academies with results in 2011 and 2012 ⁽²⁾		244 secondary similar schools ⁽³⁾	
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
Girls	48.2	48.2	49.6	49.6	48.1	48.1	48.0	47.9
Boys	51.8	51.8	50.4	50.4	51.9	51.9	52.0	52.1
All pupils	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: School Census

Notes: (1) Includes 2011 predecessor schools where necessary to maintain a consistent group. (2) Excludes sponsored Academies for whom no baseline 2010 were available. (3) Comparison schools matched based on their prior attainment, previous outcomes and levels of deprivation.

As across all state-funded secondary schools, girls outperformed boys in sponsored academies. Results for girls in sponsored academies improved at a faster rate than results for girls in similar schools, with a four percentage point improvement from 2011 to 2012 in academies, compared to a 2.9 percentage point improvement in similar schools. The difference was even starker for boys: results for boys in sponsored academies improved by 2.6 percentage points, compared to a 0.1 percentage point improvement in similar schools.

Figure 12: The proportion of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths, by gender

	244 sponsored academies with results in 2010 and 2011 (1)			244 similar schools (2)			National average		
	2011	2012	Change 11-12	2011	2012	Change 11-12	2011	2012	Change 11-12
Girls	49.7	53.7	4.0	49.8	52.7	2.9	61.9	63.6	1.7
Boys	43.5	46.1	2.6	44.5	44.6	0.1	54.6	54.2	-0.4
All pupils	46.5	49.7	3.2	47.0	48.5	1.5	58.2	58.8	0.6

Source: National Pupil Database

Notes: (1) Excludes sponsored Academies for whom no baseline 2010 were available. (2) 244 comparison schools matched based on their prior attainment, previous outcomes and levels of deprivation.

Special educational needs

Sponsored academies have higher proportions of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) than the national average for state-funded secondary schools. For those sponsored academies open as at 31 July 2011, 26.0 per cent of pupils had SEN, compared to 20.2% nationally. This mainly comprised of pupils without a statement; the proportions of pupils with a statement were similar to the national average (2.1% compared to 1.9%, respectively). This proportion with SEN has decreased slightly since 2011, from 28.4% in 2011 to 26.0% in 2012, with a slight decrease also observed nationally.

Looking at the 244 sponsored academies with results in 2011 and 2012 and comparing to similar schools, the proportion of SEN pupils was marginally higher in similar schools in both 2011 and 2012. Both groups had higher proportions of SEN than the national average, again, mainly comprising of greater proportions of pupils with SEN without a statement.

Figure 13: The proportion of pupils by special educational needs

	All secondary sponsored academies open as at 31 July (1)		National average for state-funded secondary schools		244 secondary sponsored academies with results in 2011 and 2012 (2)		244 secondary similar schools (3)	
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
No identified SEN	71.6	74.0	78.6	79.8	71.4	73.4	70.6	72.4
All SEN pupils	28.4	26.0	21.3	20.2	28.6	26.6	29.4	27.6
SEN without a statement	26.2	23.9	19.4	18.3	26.4	24.5	27.1	25.5
SEN with a statement	2.1	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2
All pupils	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: School Census

Notes: (1) Includes 2011 predecessor schools where necessary to maintain a consistent group. (2) Excludes sponsored Academies for whom no baseline 2010 were available. (3) Comparison schools matched based on their prior attainment, previous outcomes and levels of deprivation.

Results for all pupils with SEN in sponsored academies are improving faster than for such pupils in similar schools and for such pupils in all schools nationally (3.1 percentage points compared to 0.3 in similar schools and 0.3 nationally).

Figure 14: The proportion of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths by special educational needs

	244 sponsored academies with results in 2010 and 2011 (1)			244 similar schools (2)			National average		
	2011	2012	Change 11-12	2011	2012	Change 11-12	2011	2012	Change 11-12
No identified SEN	58.5	60.7	2.2	59.0	59.3	0.3	69.5	69.2	-0.3
All SEN pupils	17.9	21.0	3.1	19.4	19.7	0.3	22.1	22.4	0.3
SEN without a statement	18.5	21.7	3.2	20.0	20.5	0.5	24.7	25.2	0.5
SEN with a statement (3)	10.9	13.0	2.1	11.8	10.8	-1.0	8.5	8.4	-0.1
All pupils	46.5	49.7	3.2	47.0	48.5	1.5	58.2	58.8	0.6

Source: National Pupil Database

Notes: (1) Excludes sponsored Academies for whom no baseline 2010 were available. (2) 244 comparison schools matched based on their prior attainment, previous outcomes and levels of deprivation. (3) Results should be treated with caution due to relatively small numbers.

Equality in converter academies

On publishing the equality analysis in 2010, the department undertook to update the analysis to take account of the profile and characteristics of new academies, once known, and to undertake further work as necessary. As the early converter academies have a very different profile from the established sponsored academies, this update covers the key data for sponsored academies only – based on performance data for summer 2012. We will therefore conduct a full analysis of converter academies at a later date when sufficient data for comparing change over time is available.

11 Free schools

As a type of academy, free schools are non-profit making, independent, state-funded schools set up in response to real demand within a local area for a greater variety of schools. Introduced by the Academies Act 2010, free schools have become an integral part of the department's agenda to reform the school system by creating more choice and diversity.

Free schools are not defined by size, location or phase. They are the result of the unique visions of a wide range of proposers, including charities, universities, businesses, educational groups, visionary teachers or committed parents, to make a difference to the educational landscape. Free schools might be created because there simply are not enough school places in a local area and children have to travel too far to the nearest school, or because parents are not satisfied with the quality of provision in their local schools.

Like academies, free schools are funded on a comparable basis to other state-funded schools and benefit from a similar degree of autonomy from local authority control. Subject to the same Ofsted inspections as all state schools and with the expectation that they will maintain the same rigorous standards as other schools, all free schools are committed to providing young people with the best possible chance to succeed.

As parents would expect, the admissions arrangements of free schools are fair and transparent. Free schools are open to pupils of all abilities from the local area and cannot be academically selective.

The department started working towards opening the first of these new schools in the summer of 2010 and since then has opened 81 free schools throughout England following a rigorous and competitive assessment of hundreds of applications. These new schools will provide around 34,000 pupil places when they are full and are already proving to be very popular with parents. All of the first 24 free schools that opened in 2011 have filled, or almost filled, all their places for this year. Many have expanded to meet demand and many have large waiting lists.

The programme also continues to expand and evolve. In September 2012, the first 16-19, alternative provision and special free schools opened, joining the mainstream schools that opened in 2011 and 2012. This widening of provision will soon be supplemented by the introduction of the first specialist maths free schools for 16-18 year olds, supported by strong university maths departments and academics.

Numbers, types and locations of open free schools

The free schools programme has made rapid progress from its inception in 2010. The first 24 free schools opened on schedule in September 2011, a further 57 have opened since then and 211 schools are currently in the pre-opening phase of development. The department is continuing to accept applications for new schools to meet the strong demand throughout the country from parents, teachers and others for new schools. In 2011/12, the department received 281 applications.

The majority of the 81 free schools that have opened to date are mainstream schools (71 schools) with the remaining schools being alternative provision (6), special free schools (3)

and 16-19 (1). Seven of the 81 open schools were formerly independent schools and have now acquired free school status and joined the state sector.

Figure 15: Numbers of open free schools by phase

Primary	Secondary	All-through	14-19	16-19
36 (44%)	31 (38%)	12 (15%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)

Source: *Edubase*

Free schools are located in each English region with the largest concentration being in London and the South East (35 schools – 44%).

Figure 16: Numbers of open free schools by region

London	East	South East	North West	West Midlands	Yorks & Humber	East Midlands	South West	North East
26 (32%)	13 (16%)	9 (11%)	9 (11%)	8 (10%)	6 (7%)	5 (6%)	3 (4%)	2 (2%)

Source: *Edubase*

It is clear that there is strong demand for new schools in some of the most deprived areas of the country. In fact, 53% of open free schools are located in the 30% most deprived local areas and 18% are located in the 10% most deprived local areas.

In addition to new schools being created in deprived areas, 58% of primary and all-through free schools that opened in September 2011 are located in areas of severe basic need where the demand for pupil places significantly exceeds (by more than 5%) the number of available places. This figure rises to 60% for schools that opened in 2012. In fact, many free school proposals have been specifically put forward to address the shortage of school places in specific areas.

Performance and attainment

As the first free schools opened in September 2011, it is too early to make firm conclusions about how they are performing as many of these schools do not yet have all their year groups in place.

The 81 free schools that have opened to date represent a wide spectrum in terms of size, location and type. There is no archetypal free school, and this diversity is one of the key reasons behind the success of the programme to date.

Case study - West London Free School

The West London Free School (WLFS) is a secondary school set up by a group of parents and teachers in Hammersmith. The school opened in September 2011 with a group of 120 pupils in year seven and has received more than 1,000 applications for 120 places this year making it one of the most over-subscribed schools in the country. WLFS will provide places for 840 pupils when full.

WLFS offers pupils a classical liberal education, with a mandatory core of traditional academic subjects, complemented by art, music, drama and sport. Latin is compulsory for

all pupils during key stage 3 and the school specialises in music. WLFS aims to be a “grammar school for all”, aspiring to Harold Wilson’s original definition of a comprehensive.

Case study - The Free School Norwich

The Free School Norwich (FSN) is a primary school for 168 pupils proposed by a group of local parents and teachers. The school opened in September 2011 in a Grade II listed Georgian house located in central Norwich, close to all public transport services.

Operating an extended school service system, FSN is open from 08:15 to 17:45 for six days each week, 51 weeks of the year. With a school year split into six terms, FSN aims to provide a broad and balanced primary school education for children of all abilities, faiths and cultural backgrounds. FSN also actively promotes the use of public transport to help reduce city centre traffic congestion. Their convenient location enables parents to use public transport to travel easily to the school and their place of work in Norwich. The school also provides a free pedal and park service for families who wish to cycle to school and work.

12 University technical colleges

University technical colleges (UTCs) are academies for 14-19 year olds which focus on providing technical education that meets the needs of modern businesses. UTCs follow a model established by the Baker Dearing Educational Trust. Each UTC has one or two specialisms which range from engineering and manufacturing to construction and bio-medical sciences.

They typically cater for between 500-800 students who split their time between core academic subjects and learning specific technical skills and qualifications. All UTCs are sponsored by a local university and employers and are established to meet demand for particular skills identified by employers locally and nationally. Employers are put in the driving seat meaning that students benefit from a curriculum designed by experts in the field and are then supported to learn through work placements and access to industry standard facilities and equipment. Many UTCs also run longer term times and operate business hours to help prepare students for the world of work.

Admission arrangements of UTCs are fair, transparent and in line with the School Admissions Code. As a result of their specialisms and unique approach, UTCs operate at a sub-regional level, typically drawing pupils from a number of local authority areas.

Numbers, performance and attainment of open university technical colleges

There are currently five UTCs open and a further 39 UTCs are in development which plan to open in 2013 and beyond. The Government is therefore set to exceed the commitment in the Budget 2011 to deliver 24 UTCs by 2014. The Department accepts applications annually for new UTCs to meet the strong demand throughout the country from employers, universities, other educational providers and young people.

The 44 UTCs open and in development will create opportunities for around 27,000 young people to train as the engineers and scientists of the future – playing a crucial role in the UK's long-term economic growth. Over 400 employers are involved in UTCs, including household names such as Jaguar Land Rover and British Airways, and a large number of small and medium size enterprises.

Case study - Aston University Engineering Academy

Aston University Engineering Academy UTC opened in September 2012. Sponsored by Aston University, it specialises in engineering and science. It is based in Aston Science Park and is supported by a range of employer partners including the National Grid, Rolls Royce, Royal Air Force and E.ON. The UTC is working towards its aim of becoming a nationally recognised centre of excellence in engineering and technical education provision. The UTC has 13 specialist engineering and science workshops and laboratories that have been designed and equipped in partnership with its industrial partners. Each of these learning spaces are specifically designed to ensure that learning is practical, hands-on and set in an industrial context. As well as offering GCSEs, A levels, BTECs and a wide range of accreditations, the UTC has developed a variety of enrichment activities so that students experience a broad curriculum.

13 Studio schools

Studio schools are innovative schools for 14-19 year olds which offer a practical learning experience. They deliver academic and vocational qualifications through a project-based curriculum where study is combined with work placements delivered in partnership with local and national employers.

Studio schools are supported through development, and once open, by the Studio Schools Trust. Studio schools are small institutions backed by a range of groups including further education colleges and businesses. They typically cater for around 300 students and deliver a personalised curriculum with all students being assigned a personal coach to help tailor the curriculum to their individual needs. Many studio schools choose to specialise in particular areas including hair and beauty, construction, catering, media, science, technology, engineering, maths, business, finance, and sport. All of these areas have a common focus on practical work and enterprise. They prepare young people for the world of work by developing transferrable employability skills such as punctuality, good communication, reliability and team working, whilst enabling students to gain a strong grounding in English, maths and science.

Employers play a major part in studio schools helping to shape the curriculum and ensuring that the qualifications gained are what employers require. Students spend a significant portion of their week as employees in local businesses, with those over 16 years old usually being paid a real wage for their work.

All studio schools opening from 2012 are legally academies, have fair and transparent admission arrangements and benefit from the freedoms and flexibilities that all academies enjoy in relation to the curriculum and employment of staff.

Numbers, performance and attainment of open studio schools

There are currently 16 studio schools open across the country and a further 28 in development which plan to open in September 2013 and beyond. The department accepts applications annually from proposers wishing to establish new studio schools to meet the strong demand throughout the country from parents, teachers and others. The 44 studio schools open and in development will create opportunities for almost 14,000 young people to benefit from their unique learning model, preparing them for the world of work. More than 250 national and local employers are involved in studio schools helping to shape the curriculum and providing work experience and mentoring opportunities. These include household names such as Specsavers, Microsoft, Michelin and ASDA.

Case study – Da Vinci Studio School of Science and Engineering

Da Vinci Studio School of Science and Engineering is a studio school which opened in September 2012. Based in Stevenage, it is sponsored by North Hertfordshire College and offers students the opportunity to access a curriculum specialising in science, technology, engineering and maths. The studio school has a close partnership with local science and engineering employers including Astrium, GSK and Weldability who are involved in all aspects of the curriculum, offer work placements and industrial mentors, and provide real world problems and research projects for learners. The studio school also utilises the specialist facilities and equipment at the Stevenage Skills Centre, a local vocational training facility. Students can study a range of core qualifications including GCSEs, A levels and BTECs alongside developing a portfolio of personal and employability skills,

preparing them for employment or progression to apprenticeships or higher education. North Hertfordshire College is sponsoring another studio school planned to open in September 2013, specialising in the creative industries and enterprise.

14 Secretary of State as Principal Regulator

Since 1 August 2011 academies, voluntary and foundation schools and sixth-form colleges have been exempt charities. These institutions are now regulated by the Secretary of State for Education as their Principal Regulator instead of the Charities Commission. One of the Secretary of State's main duties is to do all that he reasonably can to promote the charity trustees' compliance with their legal obligations in exercising control and management of the academy trust. Information about compliance is published on the department's website. Trustees can also find more detailed information about their obligations on the Charity Commission's website, links are provided from the department's website.

The department and Charity Commission have entered into a memorandum of understanding setting out how both parties will work together. It includes details about the regulatory powers of both parties. Where either the department or Charity Commission has identified concerns about the control and management of the administration of an exempt charity, it will notify the other party and include information about any charity law issues it has identified, before it advises the relevant body of any action it proposes to take. The department may ask the Charity Commission to use any of its regulatory powers or indicate that those powers may be required at some stage during the conduct of the case. In 2011/12 two potential cases of non-compliance were identified, each was considered jointly by the department and Charities Commission. No formal action was required.

15 Conclusion

The academies programme continues to grow in both numbers and significance. With 2,924 academies, five university technical colleges, 16 studio schools and now 81 free schools open, the provision available to parents and pupils becomes ever more diverse. Academies of all types empower teachers and governors to take better and more immediate decisions for their pupils. They are helping to drive up standards across the board including for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.

This coming year there will be a continued drive to work with schools that would like to become an academy and take advantage of the freedoms and flexibilities the status allows them, either in their own right or with the support of a sponsor.

The department also plans to go further and faster on tackling underperformance by finding sponsors for more of the weakest primary schools and we hope more existing academies become sponsors themselves. Next year's annual report will provide a full report on progress.



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