

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy

Information for Applicants

The Academy opened in September 2008 in the buildings of the former Darwen Moorland High School. The new Academy building with its stunning facilities, including an entrepreneurship centre, is scheduled to be open in September 2010 in a new location adjacent to the town centre.

The sponsor -

The sponsor of the Academy is Rod Aldridge, providing funding through his charitable trust, and on-going support through the Aldridge Foundation. Academies are part funded by private sponsors who contribute £2 million towards the project, whilst the Government provides the balance of the funding in line with an agreed budget. The involvement of sponsors from business and other non-government areas means that the Academies benefit from a different perspective in terms of the curriculum and organisation. The Aldridge Foundation brings extensive expertise from the public and private sectors to support this project.

Academies -

Academies are a new type of secondary school, aiming to break the cycle of under-achievement in areas of social and economic deprivation. Under the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation, Blackburn with Darwen ranks as the 30th (out of 354) most deprived Local Authority. Academies are intended to provide a fresh approach to the standards of teaching and facilities needed in the 21st century and to provide a step-change in local service provision to raise standards and to tackle social and economic deprivation.

Academies bring together innovative approaches to teaching and learning with state-of-the-art technology and surroundings. A defining feature of an Academy is its specialism. We want our specialism of entrepreneurship to be a real and dynamic part of Academy life from the moment we open.

The second specialism for the academy is Sport. Whilst adhering to the National Curriculum, an Academy also provides an additional range of courses and learning experiences in relation to its specialisms.

There are five themes that will give the Academy its distinctive character. These are Entrepreneurship, Inclusion, Community, Partnership and Sport.

Entrepreneurship -

In a global, dynamic and digitally driven market there has never been a greater opportunity for young people to become successful entrepreneurs. Young people have become the focus of much of the government's enterprise agenda in recent years with over 200,000 young people expressing an interest to set up their own business.¹

Entrepreneurial attitude and aptitude together form an attractive combination for prospective employers across the UK with creativity, passion, risk taking, team work and problem solving being most highly valued characteristics of prospective employees by some of our leading corporate giants.²

We hope that Darwen Aldridge Community Academy is a place where every student can realise their potential. Developing a positive attitude and a determination to succeed are key entrepreneurial qualities that we will nurture in our students. Students will also focus on the development of employability skills and entrepreneurial capabilities with specialist business support.

Entrepreneurs can be found in many walks of life including business, education, the community, sport and the creative arts. Darwen Aldridge Community Academy (DACA) has adopted a wide interpretation of entrepreneurship, in its broadest sense entrepreneurship involves identifying a need and being able to meet that need.

A question we are often asked, is 'Can entrepreneurship be taught? Our view is very firmly that it can and the evidence of this is clear in the daily life of our Academy. We believe that becoming an entrepreneur is a state of mind and as such we hope to nurture an entrepreneurial mindset in our young people.

It is intended that all students will benefit from the specialism which will help them understand their responsibilities, learn about the work-place, understand economics, encourage problem solving and to view themselves as achievers.

The entrepreneurship specialism is at the heart of everything we do at Darwen Aldridge Community Academy. We have invested in a significant Entrepreneurship and Community team to support the specialism and our students' entrepreneurial efforts. Unique features of our specialism include:

- 1) The DAKAs – A Currency of Entrepreneurship
- 2) The Entrepreneurship Curriculum
- 3) Community Programmes

¹ Unlocking Talent – BERR 2008

² Demos – Future Face of Enterprise 2008

1) The DAKAs – A Currency of Entrepreneurship

Successful entrepreneurs embody common characteristics and qualities which can be nurtured over time. To this end, Darwen Aldridge Community Academy has developed, the *DAKA*, a new currency of entrepreneurship which provides a framework for students to embed entrepreneurship throughout the culture and ethos of the Academy. Our DAKAs include Passion, Creativity, Problem Solving, Teamwork, Risk Taking and Determination. Every term takes on a different DAKA theme. The DAKAs are integrated into the reward and recognition system where students can earn DAKA points and stickers as part of every day Academy life. DAKA badges are awarded every term to a small number of students who have made an outstanding contribution to either DAKA or the local community.

In addition we have created Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 DAKA Entrepreneurial Attributes Framework, to deepen our students understanding of each of the DAKAs and enable students to 'assess' their own entrepreneurial journey throughout their academy life. Students are able to access the DAKA self assessment via an online entrepreneurship portal.

2) The Entrepreneurship Curriculum

Students at Darwen Aldridge Community Academy engage in one lesson of entrepreneurship every week. Our aim is for students have an understanding of a wide range of enterprises from small business, corporate giants to community interest companies and for students to have engaged in their own entrepreneurial projects as part of the curriculum. An outline of the discrete curriculum model is detailed in Table 3.

Key Stage	Curriculum Programme
Key Stage 3	DACA / U-xplore Entrepreneurship Programme Students engage in themed projects covering a wide range of subjects including social enterprise, starting a small business, big business, financial capability and economics. This curriculum has been developed internally and with the support of U-xplore we have created an entrepreneurship portal to enrich students' learning.
Key Stage 4	IFS and BTEC Work Skills Students engage in a coursework based programme covering Financial Capability, Enterprise, Employability Skills, Teamwork, Volunteering and Leadership Skills leading to two Level 2 Qualifications.
Key Stage 5	Entrepreneurship Career Academy This is a targeted programme of activity for students wishing to become entrepreneurs. Each students engaging in this programmes is given access to a business mentor, guru lectures, workplace visits and paid entrepreneurship themed

	internship. Volunteering Programme Year 12 and 13 students are encouraged to actively engage in volunteering and community based programme to enrich their studies.
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3.0. Community Programmes

From its very inception DACA has made a commitment to widening the impact of the specialism with a view to regenerating the local community of Darwen. As such, DACA is represented on the Darwen and Rural Neighbourhood Board and Darwen Shops and Business Association. In addition, the local Chamber of Commerce is a strong supporter of our entrepreneurship programmes.

◆ Inspiring Communities

Inspiring Communities follows on from the *Aspiration and attainment amongst young people in deprived communities* study³ into aspirations and attainment in deprived communities which showed that while parents are the most important influence on young people, the people and places where they live also affect their aspirations. It asks schools, local agencies, community organisations, businesses, parents and the wider community to work together to get behind local young people and support them to fulfil their educational potential.

DACA successfully bid in partnership with Blackburn with Darwen and Community Voluntary Service for £450k funded project themed around entrepreneurship. Focused primarily on improving outcomes for 11 to 14 year olds, the national programme is aimed at neighbourhoods where low aspirations have been identified as a barrier to young people achieving their potential. It will work specifically with young people, their parents and communities to raise aspirations and educational attainment, as well build the self-confidence of the local community.

◆ My Life is My Business

My Life is My Business is a unique personal development programme aimed at those young people lacking opportunity and motivation, and facing an uncertain future to develop their entrepreneurial capability with a view to becoming self employed. Supported by Youth at Risk, Blackburn with Darwen Local Authority, the Aldridge Foundation and DACA, this project will engage 100 young people across Blackburn with Darwen with an intensive coaching and development programme. DACA is responsible for designing and delivering the entrepreneurship element of this project, supporting young people to engage in entrepreneurial activity and to develop their entrepreneurial ideas into a reality.

³ http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/109339/aspirations_evidence_pack.pdf

◆ DarwenCreates

Research undertaken by Make Your Mark in 2007 found that 'running my own business' is now the top career choice amongst 14 to 30 year olds. Since 2003 there has been a 22% increase in the number of young people who are thinking about setting up a business. Whilst young people are motivated to set up businesses, those that actually turn their ideas into reality is significantly lower. Mark Your Mark cite the gap between education and mainstream business support as one of the main barriers to young entrepreneurship, resulting in young people who have developed ideas 'falling off' the enterprise journey when they leave school.⁴

Darwen Aldridge Community Academy has successfully bid for £836,673 of LEGI funding for a programme of activity - DarwenCreates - which aims to bridge this gap by providing the infrastructure, people and services to support young entrepreneurs whilst in education and beyond. This will incorporate the building of an Entrepreneurship Centre within the Academy, including an Entrepreneurship Bridge, which will house 11 business pods. The pods will provide workspace for young entrepreneurs and community social enterprises. Young entrepreneurs will be supported to access enterprise start up grants and to be self funding. In addition the Entrepreneurship Bridge will provide reception and administration support for the enterprises housed within the pods.

Darwen Creates will be specifically targeted at young people, reducing some of the perceived entrepreneurial barriers of young people. For example, inappropriate business support for young people and welcoming spaces for young people to develop their ideas. This is a unique and ambitious project in the secondary education sector. The benefits to DACA students will be immense in terms of providing accessible young entrepreneurial role models whom share their learning space on a day to day basis.

The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy provides a local link with the core of the Darwen community through students and their family, friends and other connections. The overarching aim of the project is to provide a community entrepreneurial hub with appropriate specialist training and support. In doing this, it will contribute to the regeneration and development of the local community.

The new Academy building also will have an Entrepreneurship Centre occupying the physical space in the entrance atrium of the Academy for day to day entrepreneurial learning activity. The centre will have flexible working spaces including classroom, lecture and seminar facilities, a conference room, state of the art technology to support activity and technical and administrative support staff. It is intended that the centre will be used by Academy students, students from other primary and secondary schools and colleges, adult and community learners and the local business community. The Entrepreneurship Centre is intended to be a bold statement of the

⁴ 'Mind the Gap': from Youth Enterprise Aspirations to Business Creation and Growth, August 2007

Academy's main specialism of Entrepreneurship and to provide a facility for community and business involvement with the Academy.

Inclusion –

The Academy will be inclusive and although it will be its own Admissions Authority, it is planned to have a rules of admission policy in accordance with the Local Authority's Community School admission arrangements, ensuring that the Academy serves young people from its local community.

The Academy will be a large organisation. It will have an annual standard Year 7 entry number of 240 students. It is projected that when the Academy reaches full capacity by 2012, it will have 1200 11-16 year olds on roll and 400 post 16 students. It will have approximately 140 employees and provide opportunities for community learning and for wider use of the Academy facilities.

Special Education Needs- There will be a base in the Academy dedicated to supporting students with SEN. There will be a range of specialist resources and facilities to support the commitment to inclusion. The new facilities will offer a barrier free building enabling every individual to access the full curriculum, including those students with physical disability.

Community –

The new Academy will contribute to the wider developments of the area. It will support the Academy's commitment to social entrepreneurship, enabling students engaged in community activity to easily access all parts of the town. Students will be encouraged to go out and work in the local community on project work that supports both local businesses and the local community.

The Academy is committed to being an active partner in the local regeneration strategy. In addition to providing an education for the young people of the town, it will provide opportunities for local residents of all ages to access the learning and recreational facilities. It is intended that the Academy will offer community learning opportunities, for instance in the development of ICT skills. It is also intended that facilities will be available for use by community groups, voluntary groups and local businesses.

The Academy intends to offer a range of adult education services that address local need. It plans to operate beyond traditional curriculum hours to increase the range of subjects on offer and to meet the needs of the local community.

Partnership –

There is a strong commitment to ensuring the best possible provision for all students. To achieve this, collaboration with a range of partners is essential. Building on the work done to date to develop the network of partner agencies, strong partnerships will be forged with a large number of organisations including primary and secondary schools, further and higher education organisations and local and national businesses.

It is anticipated that the Academy will support the extended schools initiative through partnership with healthcare providers, social services, the police, the local library and library theatre, leisure services and community and voluntary organisations.

The Academy intends to build strong partnerships with the business community. This includes offering facilities for business usage, such as the entrepreneurship centre for activities such as interviews, meetings and conferences. The Academy also intends to offer a community learning programme and this will provide opportunity for employees of local businesses to develop their knowledge and skills. There will be more formal arrangements for training opportunities for employees of local businesses.

It is anticipated that the Academy will contribute to developing a skilled local workforce to support the development of the local economy. Other links with business will include work experience placements for students, extended work based learning opportunities, business mentoring of students, provision of apprenticeships and additional business support for young people progressing into industry and training.

The Academy will forge strong partnerships with parents and families of students in the Academy. There will be reporting to parents on their children's progress on a regular basis and parents and carers will be actively encouraged to be involved in the life of the Academy. The specialism of social entrepreneurship will promote parent and family involvement in the work of the Academy.

Sport –

The Academy will place a major emphasis on sport and widening the participation of all young people in sporting activity and encouraging the adoption of healthy lifestyles.

The development of new sports facilities at the Academy will be designed to complement those planned and those already available in the local area

The Academy will have excellent sports facilities both on and off the site including two new football pitches located at Blacksnape, an all-weather sports pitch, a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), a new sports hall, dance studio/gymnasium, drama studio and a fitness studio located on the main site. It is intended that all of these facilities will be available and accessible for wider community use.

Other characteristics of the Academy –

In addition to the five themes, there will be other characteristics of the new Academy that will be notably different to the predecessor school:

Establishing post-16 provision –

The Academy will have new Sixth Form provision and a Sixth Form centre designed and integrated into the new building. The Sixth Form will include student study areas, specialised teaching and learning facilities including seminar and tutorial rooms and smaller classroom spaces, communal spaces and cafe area and sixth form office space. It is intended to establish the Sixth Form base as a part of the Academy from opening in September 2008 using one part of one of the existing buildings.

It is anticipated that the curriculum offer will be a blend of traditional A Levels, vocational/applied A Levels and vocational/applied B.Tech. qualifications. The Academy will work with a range of partners to ensure that a broad coherent and relevant curriculum offer is in place for all students, and that strong, supported pathways are in place to enable young people to progress to higher education, further training and employment.

The Academy is committed to working in partnership with other organisations to support the development of provision, care and achievement for 14-19 year olds. The Academy aims to offer a distinct provision, not least in relation to its new facilities, ethos and Entrepreneurship specialism and curriculum offer, but also to complement existing provision across the borough.

An imaginative and innovative curriculum is planned for the Academy, to be delivered in a state of the art environment specifically designed for this Academy. The timetable will combine an offer of academic and vocational courses to ensure that the needs of all students are met.

In addition to general teaching areas, there will be specialist facilities for art, design and technology related subjects, sport, expressive and performing arts related subjects, the sciences, business and Information Communication Technology (ICT) and work related learning, for instance in an industry-

standard catering suite. There will be well equipped classrooms for all general subjects, with state of the art ICT facilities to support learning across the curriculum. The curriculum will feature regular 'Academy' days when timetable activities for particular year groups will be suspended to enable extended activities to take place making use of the specialist facilities.

The design of the Academy will reflect a curriculum structure where lessons are within extended morning and afternoon learning sessions, with additional extra-curricular sessions beyond the traditional school day. The design of the new Academy enables each individual year group to use the extensive canteen facilities and recreation spaces during break times apart and away from other year groups. This will facilitate management of the Academy site, developing a year group identity and promotion of mature sensible attitudes amongst students.

In partnership with the Academy design team, we have planned a layout of high quality classrooms, specialist rooms and larger learning spaces that will be conducive to a calm and easily managed environment. Attention has been given to ensuring generous space in circulation areas, bright spaces with unobstructed lines of sight to enable student supervision and enabling ease of movement when necessary from one area to another within the Academy.

There will be a new culture and ethos related to Entrepreneurship and the expectation of high standards of achievement for all in the Academy. There will be many contributory factors, but the basis of this will be a strong emphasis on a positive attitude in a learning community, a recognition that educational achievement is important, a new curriculum, new pedagogies for learning, a developing staff with wider knowledge, skills and expertise, a new school day, new uniform, post 16 provision, the new specialisms and being based in a 21st Century learning environment with first class facilities.

We hope that this information motivates you to apply for this important position. You will probably recognise that we are in the process of preparing for the new academy and this is a great opportunity to make a contribution to an exciting project and to be involved in shaping the future educational provision in the town.

Brendan Loughran
Principal