

DRAFT EDUCATION VISION FOR THE WEST LAKES ACADEMY – FEBRUARY 2008

This is the draft education vision for the Academy agreed by the project Steering Group which includes the three Sponsors and representatives of both the County Council (the Local Authority) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). It is a vision that will be discussed with the incoming Principal and Chief Executive and implemented over a period of time as the Academy develops in readiness for its move to the new building in 2011.

Preface

What follows is a draft education vision for the Academy agreed by the Sponsors, Sellafield Ltd.; the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA); and the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). It draws on various documents and discussions as well as on recent consultation meetings, including with staff, and also on best practice and the experience of educationalists working in a range of roles, both in the UK and internationally. It is designed to deliver effective learning for all. In particular it accepts:

- A two year KS3 followed by a three year KS4, the former being project led
- An organisational model based on Learning Zones

There are a number of matters that need to be determined, not least

- The Academy day – see below
- The pastoral support arrangements – see below

Introduction

This vision provides guidance for the creation of the Academy which will meet the needs of young people in North Copeland preparing for adult and working life in the twenty-first Century. It recognises that:

- The world of 2020 will be very different to the world today
- The pace of change is increasing, hence the importance of flexibility
- Young people have, and will have increasingly, greater access to information and learning material independently of school
- Adulthood entails economic participation but more
- 18+ year olds will still be at an early stage of learning



- The current curriculum defined in subject terms is not well suited to equipping every young person with the knowledge and skills they will need for a fulfilling adult life
- There will be a greater use of adults other than teachers – support staff, graduates, artists, sports people, and people from industry and business

Changing lives through learning

There are shared aims for the Academy. We wish it to:

- Be a centre of excellence in learning and teaching
- Have a curriculum that is fit for purpose, offering differentiation and personalisation
- Be in a learning environment that is
 1. Sustainable with low environmental impact
 2. Flexible for a range of uses
 3. Accessible for all and exceeding minimum legislative requirements
 4. Safe and secure
 5. Inspiring
- Be an 'always on' ICT rich environment
- Prepare all students for a successful adult and working life in a 21st Century global society
- Be at the heart of the area's regeneration
- Involve the community
- Adopt a new approach to extended education
- Have no selection by ability, aptitude or faith
- First achieve and then exceed national standards in achievement, attainment and progression
- Be committed to excellence and continuous improvement
- Have students at its heart, putting their interests above those of the institution
- Involve parents/carers



- Have strong and inspirational leadership
- Engage with the Every Child Matters agenda
- Work with primary schools to ease transition
- Work appropriately with special schools
- Work appropriately with other Academies and secondary schools
- Specialise in science, business and enterprise
- Be a leading partner in 14-19 developments
- Secure each student remaining in education or training post-16 with a majority progressing to higher education
- Have the highest standards of work, behaviour and dress
- Be a community which respects and values each member, where relationships are based on mutual trust
- Be a place of order and honesty, a happy but demanding community
- Nurture the talents of all
- Celebrate success
- Be a healthy institution
- Provide good quality, comprehensive and impartial information, advice and guidance
- Offer well structured and appropriate work experience for all its students
- Have equality and diversity central to its work
- Fully integrate students with special needs including both the gifted and talented and those with behavioural and/or learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Have clear policies and procedures
- Value vocational and academic routes equally

Students

We want our students to:



- Have 'personal best' as a consistent goal
- Be well behaved and self-disciplined
- Be motivated and confident learners and creative thinkers
- Make informed choices
- Wear uniform with pride
- Pursue healthy life-styles
- Be respectful and tolerant of each other and of differing cultures
- Feel comfortable taking risks - having a 'can do' attitude
- Develop excellent numeracy and communication skills, including ICT skills
- Develop financial and enterprise awareness
- Develop skills for the improved well-being of themselves and care of others
- Have a strong sense of personal and social responsibility, and a strong sense of community
- Take pride in their own and in other's achievements
- Take an active part in their own learning and in school life
- Be involved in meaningful ways in appropriate decision making within the Academy

Staff

We want our staff to:

- Be inspirational
- Empower students
- Be effective team players
- Be willing to innovate and work together in innovative ways
- Have a 'can do' attitude
- Deploy a range of learning and teaching strategies which accommodate different paces and styles of student learning



- Teach with rigour and enthusiasm
- Use real-life examples and contexts to secure the relevance and purpose of learning
- Accelerate learning whenever appropriate
- Customise the curriculum to meet the needs and abilities of each student
- Regularly review learning targets with students
- Use ICT extensively but appropriately
- Equip students with the skills to learn for themselves
- Evaluate their own learning needs and take responsibility for their own continuing professional development
- Forge and sustain partnerships at local, national and international levels
- Put students at the heart of the educational experience
- Stretch and challenge students
- Promote a healthy life-style through the Academy's approach to exercise, nutrition, safety and emotional well-being
- Be exemplary in terms of both dress and behaviour

Working with others

We want the Academy to be at the heart of the area's economic and social regeneration and to:

- Forge a partnership with parents/carers
- Work in partnership with other professionals and agencies, including the Local Authorities, to ensure students' needs are met in a co-ordinated fashion
- Improve 'whole community' access to ICT
- Play a leading role in the development of the 14-19 curriculum of which Diplomas are a part
- Make provision for adult and community learning
- Establish strong links with business and industry



- Collaborate with the family of Copeland and west Cumbria schools, including the use of peripatetic teachers and other adults working across a number of schools, for example in areas where recruitment of quality staff is problematic
- Work with primary schools, planning for transition, undertaking teacher exchange
- Make specialist facilities available to others
- Plan for students' progression to further and higher education
- Utilise new technologies to access learning resources and expertise from local, national and international sources
- Develop opportunities for 'off-site' learning including work based learning and mentoring
- Work with the University and with Lakes College West Cumbria
- Develop strong international links

Organisation and curriculum

In the Preface we committed to a two year KS3 followed by a three year KS4, and an organisational model based on Learning Zones. We have agreed that the new building should have at its heart an information centre, now referred to as the Learning Support Zone – see below

Key Stage 3

In order to ease the transition from primary school into the Academy there will be a Transition Learning Zone the key aspect of which is that it will be based on a primary school style of approach. It will include both year 7 and year 8 students. The intention is to develop the fundamental skills of numeracy and communication, including literacy and ICT skills, through a project based approach around key themes onto which are mapped the national curriculum targets. The Learning Zone will occupy a discrete area of the new building with a variety of teaching and learning spaces including an 'always on' project workshop. Year 7 students will spend some 60% of their time in this Zone, reducing to about 50% in year 8. There will be a core team of teachers supporting learning across all areas. Students will leave the Zone to access specialist facilities including music, art, drama and sport. Students will be able to sit their Standard Assessment Tests (SATS) during/ at the end of KS3 or at the end of year 9 if more appropriate



Key Stage 4

The key aspects of KS4 are the range of the curricula available and its duration of three years. Students will enter this phase at the start of year 9 during which time they will undertake programmes of study that prepare them for the specialist courses in years 10 and 11 as well as for progression to post-16 study. Alongside a full range of GCSE provision access to the full 14-19 entitlement, including Diplomas, will be provided as will access to appropriate learning elsewhere. Students will have access to information, including financial information, and impartial advice and guidance (IAG). The expertise and connections of the Sponsors will be utilised to make work-related learning an important aspect of this Key Stage. A 14-16 re-engagement programme providing a tailored programme and intensive personal support will be embraced for those students at risk of drop-out or under-performance.

Post-16

Our aim of each student remaining in education or training post-16 with a majority progressing to higher education will be advanced by creating a special sixth form identity. This will include a separate area of the new building consisting of social and private study facilities, and, if practical, an internet cafe. The current post-16 curricula will be enhanced by:

- Offering a limited range of higher education modules that will help prepare students for entry to higher education
- Encouraging students to take the new extended project to help them develop research and independent learning skills
- Further preparation for employment

Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD)

We recognise that practice relating to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities had led the way in many developments subsequently taken up more generally - individualised teaching, the use of ICT, the use of assessment to guide teaching and the involvement of parents/carers for example. It is our intention that every student will follow an individual learning plan, with goals appropriate to his/her capabilities, capacities and interests, supported by a personal learning mentor. It will be important that students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities join in with their peers and share in common activities as much as is possible with specialist support as needed- and this will be our presumption. However, we recognise that for some such students for some of the time, in order to provide high quality appropriate learning, a greater or lesser degree of segregation may be desirable.

The Gifted and Talented



The Academy will nurture the talents of each of its students and will provide materials and support to students with exceptional skills and talents and facilitate accelerated learning whenever appropriate.

'Extended School' opportunities

We want the Academy to promote a wide range of out of school activities and opportunities as an integral part of the whole Academy experience. By 2010 the Academy will provide access to the 'extended school' core offer of:

- Sport, music and the arts
- Study support
- A Breakfast club
- Childcare provision
- A Homework club
- Parenting support
- Referral to specialist services
- Adult learning
- Business and enterprise activities

Each Learning Zone will plan for and utilise visits and residentials, including developing international links.

Pastoral Support

An effective and comprehensive pastoral support system is essential to developing the confidence of and providing security for each student. In parallel with the Learning Zones there will be a pastoral support system based on 4 houses operating across all year groups. Each house will consist of around 300 students and be subdivided into a number of learning families each with some 30 students. Families will be of mixed age and gender and utilise older students (appropriately trained) to provide peer tutoring and mentoring. Each house will be based within one of the Learning Zones (excluding both the Learning Support Zone and Transition Learning Zone) and will have an area which includes a small staff resource base and adjacent flexible break-out space to enable, for example, team meetings. There will be inter-house sporting and social activities.

ICT



Today's young people have grown up with technology. They easily adapt to changing technologies and they have, and will increasingly have, greater access to information and learning materials independently of the Academy and 'formal' teaching. We want ICT to have a transformational role in motivating and enabling students to reach their full potential. We want the Academy to be an 'always on' ICT rich environment with leading edge ICT provision embedded into all aspects of learning. We intend that the Academy will create an inspirational ICT experience for all students that will widen their horizons locally, nationally and internationally. The Academy will have a sustainable approach to investment in hardware and software and will support staff in becoming confident through differentiated programmes of continuing professional development. To achieve these aims we will:

- Provide all staff and students with training and access to a range of digital devices and software
- Establish an open ICT experience that is safe, reliable, accessible and globally orientated
- Deploy technology that provides parents with access to information
- Promote individual learning styles supported by technologies
- Use wireless technology to ensure that every room is an ICT learning space
- Introduce an holistic approach to technology and the management of data, including electronic attendance registers, the tracking of students' progress, reporting results, to cashless vending and security CCTV systems
- Ensure staff are able to plan and prepare teaching and learning materials that are well planned and interesting
- Enable staff to use and develop online assessment tools
- Develop a central information portal offering easy access to e-mail, timetables, documents, homework and the Learning Platform

This vision for ICT spans a period of years – up until 2012.

The Learning Zones

We wish to create a curriculum framework that is well suited to equipping every young person with the knowledge and skills they will need for a fulfilling adult life. The Academy will, therefore, have a framework that is based around core strands of learning marshalled through a number of Learning Zones. The core strands of learning will include:

- **Communication** - extending beyond words to include graphical, numerical, audio/visual, electronic, languages – foreign languages and sign language



- **Mathematics** – an underpinning role for living and working, data handling, statistics - and delivered in an enjoyable way
- **Science and Technology** – basic scientific facts and methods, impact on society, understanding of science-based claims, engineering and construction
- **The Arts** – literature, drama, cinema, music, dance and the visual arts
- **Citizenship and the environment** – government and the law, issues of local, national and global concern
- **Sport** – a wide range of physical and sporting activities
- **Sense of self** – drawing on history, geography, social studies - delivered in different ways and with a different focus
- **Business and enterprise skills** – finance, enterprise skills, including Young Enterprise

These coherent core strands of learning will be based in and operate through a number of Learning Zones. These will include:

- **Transition** (where the majority of the year 7 and year 8 curriculum will be delivered)
- **Science and Technology**, to include mathematics
- **Creativity and performance**, to include the arts and sport
- **Community, culture and communications**, to include sense of self and citizenship and the environment
- **Business and enterprise**, to contain business units
- **Learning support**

The Learning Support Zone will be a most important physical area of the building. It will contain books and other physical learning resources and computing facilities with staff trained and capable to provide support. It will be the place where good quality, comprehensive and impartial advice services will be located as well as other external agencies, for example health professionals, the University. It will provide a unit/s designed for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities when they are not joining with their peers.

Each Learning Zone will:

- Contain teams of teachers supported by a substantial number of other adults including learning assistants with a range of specialist skills



- Be designed to look and feel like a modern working environment
- Have spaces with the capacity to easily alter layout
- Have a range of spaces in terms of size and function, including spaces capable of supporting one-to-one learning and small group mentoring and peer tutoring
- Have specialist facilities appropriate to the particular Learning Zone, most of which (eg sport facilities) will be 'always on' and staffed by technicians and other suitably qualified adults
- Have shared staff facilities

Leadership and Management

We expect staff to be learning leaders and act as role models. We anticipate that each member of staff will be a member of a Learning Zone and that most will be a member of a house team with responsibility for the development and progress of a learning family. Our initial view is of a Leadership Team consisting of staff responsible for the following functions:

- The Principal and Chief Executive
- A Deputy
- Pre-16 (to include relationships with primary and special schools)
- Post-16 (to include relationships with further and higher education and training)
- Learning Support (to include Pastoral)
- Corporate Services (to include finance)

There will, in addition, be five Learning Zone Heads:

- Transition (with a line to Learning Support)
- Creativity and Performance (with a line to Pre-16)
- Community, culture and communications (with a line to Pre-16)
- Business and Enterprise (with a line to post-16)
- Science and Technology (with a line to post-16)

Middle management would include curriculum specialists reporting to Learning Zone Heads each of whom (except Transition) would themselves have a curriculum specialism. Together they would cover:



- Technology
- Mathematics
- Science
- Physical Education/leisure/sport
- Music
- Dance and Drama
- Art
- English
- Foreign Languages
- Humanities including, history/geography/RE/citizenship
- Business and ICT

The Corporate Services Director would hold, in addition to finance, ICT, HR, Catering, cleaning, etc.

The learning day

We believe that a three session day with each session lasting for two hours, but, where appropriate to the learning, with sessions broken into two one hour parts would be the optimum for the delivery of effective learning. The learning day will start at 0845 with registration and guidance in house areas and with the first session starting at 0900. The second session will begin at 1130 with the third session starting at 1400. The last hour of this third session will be the first part of the 'extended school' programme. The period from 1600 to 1800 will be a continuation of this but its exact duration will depend on the nature of the activities available. There will be no lunchtime break - a single midday meal reduces energy levels and impairs learning. Instead the 30 minute break between sessions 1 and 2 and between sessions 2 and 3 will allow for a range of dining opportunities and food will be available at the start and end of day. This will also have the advantage of spreading demand and minimising queuing.

End points

From the above, a staffing structure begins to flow as does the design of the new build, the entrance to which must be of interest and motivate both students and staff. Learning Zones will define larger spaces and could be built around an open inner courtyard/garden area. All spaces



must have telephone connections to a central point enabling a senior member of staff to be called to any point of disturbance. All teaching spaces should be visible from outwith. The Creativity and Performance Learning Zone should have drama and dance studios as well as access to sports facilities, including a climbing wall and a swimming pool. And the Science and Technology Learning Zone should have a comprehensive suite of laboratories and workshops. Dining, storage and toileting facilities will need to be designed in as will a central administrative function and a lecture hall.



