



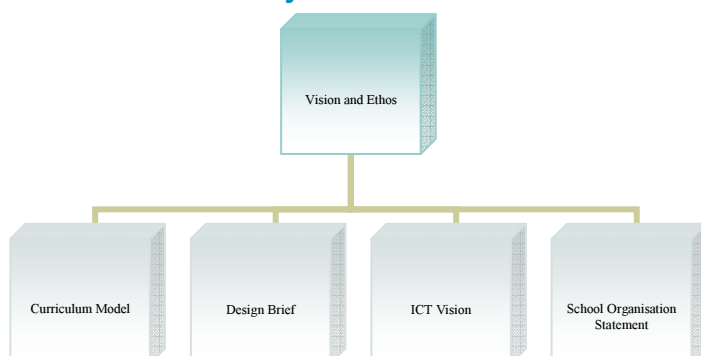
Accountants & business advisers

The Foundation Blocks of the Academy

A well-planned Academy is a successful Academy. The most crucial elements in its development are clear, robust thinking and planning from an early stage. These are the foundation blocks of the Academy.

There are two key planning activities which must be conducted right at the start of the Academy project: visioning and curriculum analysis. Visioning establishes the Academy's ethos and vision, whereas curriculum analysis establishes the curriculum model, the design brief, the ICT vision and the creation of the school organisation statement.

Fig 1. The foundation of a successful Academy



Visioning

The visioning exercise establishes the ethos and the vision for the Academy. **Ethos** is crucial to establish at this early stage as it will address and articulate the Academy's culture. The Academy's ethos must be a short but comprehensive statement, which outlines how the Academy defines its character and philosophy, and its aims. The ethos will also be used to

communicate the culture of the Academy to key stakeholders.

At the same time there is a need to establish how the ethos will look and work in the Academy. The **vision** must detail the overarching aims of the Academy, its culture and specialism, in addition to naming the sponsor and key partners. The vision should also articulate the Academy's success criteria, its aspirations and how it intends to achieve them. Other areas that need to be addressed within the vision include pastoral care, mentoring / nurturing and behaviour management, citizenship,

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self-improvement and independence.

Curriculum analysis

Conducting curriculum analysis allows the creation of the **curriculum model**. This sets out the Academy's approaches to curriculum development and delivery, support for students and organisation of learning. Once the curriculum model is formalised it needs to be communicated to key stakeholders. The curriculum model should also include the Academy's specialism and how it will be used to support school improvement. The rest of the curriculum should also be formally articulated at this stage, along with the approach to the 'Every Child Matters' government programme.

Curriculum analysis also forms the basis of the **design**

brief. This ensures that the Academy building reflects the vision and that the building itself supports the delivery of the curriculum. The design obviously needs to be practical, with enough accommodation for the anticipated number of students and staff.

Curriculum analysis should also articulate the **ICT vision**. For consistency, this vision should be shared with DCSF and BECTA, the local authority and other key stakeholders. At this stage a document should be created to formalise the vision of how ICT will be used by Academy pupils and staff. It should include specific details of how ICT will be used to enhance teaching and learning, as well as its use in particular subject areas. The ICT vision should not be descriptive of ICT tools. The final output of curriculum analysis is the **school**

organisation statement which reflects how the Academy will operate, including the length of the Academy day, term and year. The structure of the school should appear in the school organisation statement, which may include the make up of houses and mini-schools as well as fundamental details such as age ranges, timetables and holiday patterns. Collaboration with others should also be detailed. Once formalised the statement should be used to clearly communicate the Academy's operations to the key stakeholders.

From the above it can be seen that early thinking and planning in the Academy project is critical in shaping the final outcome.

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