



Blue Skies

News from United Learning Trust

October 2005

October 6th was a day to remember as we celebrated the official opening of **Manchester Academy's** spacious new building in the morning and the Foundation Ceremony at **Salford City Academy** in the afternoon. These two important commemorations mark the enormous progress that is being made in our Academies programme – we thank many helpers and our benefactors for their support in bringing us to this point.

Manchester Academy was opened by Lord Carey of Clifton, UCST Chairman, with the dedication by the Bishop of Middleton. The Principal, Kathy August, was our host for an excellent day of tours around the buildings and demonstrations from the students in sports, technology, science, art and ICT. The music of the gospel choir lifted the atmosphere, as did the palpable joy on the faces of every student who can now enjoy a fine school with facilities that rival the best in the country.

The engine of education and learning is really beginning to work. The first task was to enthuse students and to win their commitment. This is demonstrated by the level of pupil attendance at Manchester which has risen from around 75% in the old Ducie High School to 92% in the Academy. The students have already shown that they are capable of improved results with 25% of the eligible year achieving more than 5 good GCSE results compared with only 8% the year before. We expect more and more over the years as we build this new culture of energy and performance. Congratulations to Kathy August, and her team, who are really making a difference.



*Sir Ewan Harper
Chief Executive ULT*

At **Salford**, we do not yet have the new building to celebrate, but we conducted a Foundation Ceremony to demonstrate the importance of the change to Academy status. Each pupil and staff member received a certificate celebrating their status as a foundation member of the Academy. It was a time of great pride for us all to see the hopeful faces assembled together and this increased our determination that the future will be exciting and bright for each of them.

We are pleased to announce that the **Walthamstow Academy** will go ahead after lengthy processes of public consultation and detailed examination of our plans. There were objections at the School Organising Committee which needed to agree the closure of the predecessor school. This led to an adjudication which crucially upheld the transfer to an Academy. Design work continues apace on the new buildings and we just await the Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State to enable the school to move to Academy status next September.

We will be opening five Academies in September 2006: **Paddington, Barnsley, Walthamstow and two in Sheffield**. As you will imagine, this provides a busy schedule for the teams working in each project but great progress is being made across the board. Principals are currently being appointed to take forward the detailed work at each Academy. We welcome Dave Berry to Barnsley. He is currently a Deputy Head at Thomas Telford CTC. This is one of the best schools in the country and we are very fortunate to have a man of Dave's calibre joining us to lead our Academy in Barnsley.

Our original strength and experience has come through our UCST Schools and they remain at the heart of our operations. Here we are in the process of completing three major mergers in **Hull, Hampshire and Ashford**, together with extensive buildings and improvements at **Surbiton and Guildford High Schools**. The combined experience that this brings has continued to widen our project management expertise and to improve our understanding of good school design.

I am also delighted to be welcoming new team members to our Head Office group. We have been able to attract people of the highest calibre to join our programme, coming from distinguished careers and deciding that they wished to join in the vision for our Academies and in strengthening our existing group of schools. The opportunity for the whole group to innovate and deliver exceptional education through our exchanges between private and maintained sector schools is being converted from hope to reality.

I welcome Graham Kershaw as Group HR Director. He will work with people right across the group with particular emphasis on senior appointments and accelerating a programme of professional development and training for all staff. Graham is also deeply involved in the careful and complex work of transferring people from predecessor schools into our Academies.

David Hanson joins us as Executive Director of Education following a career in education that spans both the independent sector and state sectors. Latterly David was responsible for the national teaching awards that celebrate the great contribution of teachers to national life. David has also directed the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools and brings a wealth of relevant expertise to our education team.

Eleanor Sturdy has joined us as Development Director with particular focus on the Academies programme where we need to continue raising funds and building enduring partnerships with business, the community and other stakeholders. The programme has already attracted a wide range of distinguished benefactors and Eleanor will be responsible for ensuring that each is involved to the extent that they wish. Communications are an integral part of this and so Eleanor will develop our communications materials and other events for us to keep in close touch. An important development has been the networks which we are now developing with business sector partners. Eleanor's experience in the City financial world, including periods with Goldman Sachs and Merrill Lynch, brings very special skills to support these vital relationships.



Eleanor Sturdy

Some of our readers contact us with comments and ideas—I always enjoy that and hope it will continue and grow.

With best wishes,

Sir Ewan Harper

Paddington Academy

With financial support from the Entertainment Software Charity

- Building work is progressing well for the Paddington Academy, and the Principal Designate, Barbi Goulding, has been busy developing her detailed plans for the exciting curriculum that will start in September 2006.
- Barbi has been carefully designing a highly practical and smart uniform for the students which will incorporate the blue and gold colours of our generous benefactor, the Entertainment Software Charity.



Paddington Academy

- The new senior team is currently being appointed and the local parents evenings have been very well attended.

Northampton Academy

- Whereas the predecessor school had never been over-subscribed, there were 642 applications for our 240 places. The sixth form has also increased in popularity with an increasing number coming to us in Year 12 from other local schools.
- The Academy saw 36% of GCSE students achieve more than 5 good grades (A*-C) which is a significant improvement on the predecessor school's 5 year average of 23%.
- We are delighted to announce that Rt Revd Peter Hullah will join Northampton Academy as Principal from January 2006. Peter has worked in both education and the church throughout his 30 year career, including headship at Chetham's School in Manchester. His diverse international experience will make an enormous contribution to the Northampton Academy and its community.

Manchester Academy



The Plaque is unveiled by Lord Carey

This extract from The Principal's Speech at the opening ceremony of Manchester Academy provides eloquent testimony to the changes that are underway:

'We wanted today to express our vision for our Academy through words, music and to show you the progress we are making towards this.

When we began in September 2003 there were few people who believed in the vision we had. Every day there are students who provide us with examples of how wrong those others were.

The GCSE results last year tripled the year's before, no student left without at least one GCSE pass (nationally last year it was only 92%) and our attendance is one of the highest of any secondary school in the City.

*We still have a long way to go to be the sort of school I want this to be but we have made **such** progress over the last two years that I know the ambition we have is realistic and achievable.*

There will always be some who will resent our success and wish for our failure but we do not let that stop us. We know that what we are doing is right and that the talent, ability, compassions and generosity shown by the overwhelming majority of our students deserves a response of equal magnitude.

Some of our young people have experienced and are experiencing things in their lives which many of the adults here would find it difficult if not impossible to deal with.

My job is to make sure that those young people are able to have the best environment and the best teaching possible to help them achieve. Sympathy and support is important but if it does not come with high expectations it is of no long term benefit to those who need it the most.

Finally I would like to pay tribute to two groups of people - firstly my colleagues, the staff teams at the Academy. Many when they came to work here made a leap of faith. Many had friends and colleagues who warned them against it, many who have come as newly or recently qualified teachers are better teachers than I could ever be. Many have had to get used to completely different ways of doing things and have done so with humour and good will.

And to our students who are some of the brightest, funniest, most tolerant and kindest young people I have worked with in over thirty years.

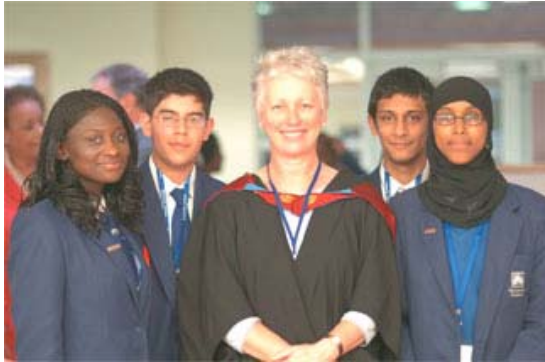
I am in debt to you all.'

Kathy August



The Principal and Kemoy Barlow delight the audience with a performance of 'I Believe I can Fly'

Manchester Academy



The Principal and Ambassadors of Manchester Academy



Dame Angela Rumbold addresses the students on 'reaching for the top'



Students and staff of Manchester Academy



Joe Ennis-Cole demonstrates a science experiment to Lord Carey



Sir Ewan Harper, Mrs Kathy August and Lord Carey in the Faith Room



Food Technology students

Salford Academy

Foundation Certificate Ceremony

The ULT Governors were delighted to attend a special foundation ceremony to mark the beginning of Salford City Academy. The significance of this transition in status was marked by every student receiving a certificate, and the occasion was a celebration for all who are working so hard to make the Academy a success. We look forward to opening the new buildings next year.



Foundation Certificate Ceremony



The Principal, Elizabeth Haddock



ULT's Deputy Chief Executive, Charlotte Rendle-Short, presents certificates



Emmanuel Oladipo



The Bishop of Middleton blesses the Academy

Sheffield Academies

Waltheof

- The consultation process for the Sheffield Academy, Waltheof, is complete and independent educational consultant Dame Jocelyn Barrow has issued her report. The vast majority of stakeholders, including parents and teachers, were in favour of the proposal, which will see the Academy opening in the Waltheof School in September 2006. It will then be replaced by new state of the art facilities, to be constructed on the existing site. Funding approval is scheduled for October/November this year and will be closely followed by the appointment of a Principal Designate, who will be responsible for running the Academy.
- In our public consultation exercise, 83% of parents in the area believe that the Academy will have beneficial impact on the local community. 79% think that the proposed specialism meet the needs from the community.
- A local parent commented *“if they do what they say and improve things, it gives me hope for the future”*.
- The Academy will specialise in Business and Enterprise and will accommodate 1,050 11-16 year olds, with provision for up to 300 sixth form places on top.

Myrtle Springs



Myrtle Springs Academy

- The consultation process for the second Sheffield Academy, Myrtle Springs, is now complete, with 77% of stakeholders supporting the Academy proposal and 76% of parents believing the Academy would have a beneficial impact on the area. With funding approval scheduled for October this year, the Academy will initially open on the existing site in September 2006, before transferring to a new purpose built facility to be constructed alongside.
- This Academy will follow the specialism of Performing Arts, supported by a theme of Business and Enterprise and will also have 1,050 11-16 year olds, with provision for up to 300 sixth form places. Students will benefit from the very latest facilities including state-of-the-art ICT and learning resource centres, a multi purpose hall for performances, dance and drama studio, facilities for digital arts and textiles, a specialist sixth form centre, indoor and outdoor sports facilities including an all-weather sports pitch and a multi-use games area.

Lambeth Academy

Lambeth Academy has welcomed its second cohort of students as well as several more new staff. The Academy received 1257 applicants for its 180 places in Year 7 which is great evidence of the early success that has started to emerge in this brand new facility in Lambeth.

We were also very pleased to hear that students from Lambeth Academy were successful at the local Young and Creative Art competition with 9 pieces displayed at the Bettie Morton Gallery.

Barnsley Academy

With the planning still to be completed Barnsley Academy will open in buildings currently occupied by the predecessor school, Elmhirst, before moving into state of the art, purpose built accommodation. We are expecting that the funding agreement will be signed in October 2005. We are delighted that Dave Berry has agreed to lead Barnsley Academy. He joins us from the very successful Thomas Telford CTC.

This Academy will follow the specialism of Science, supported by a theme of Business and Enterprise. It will accommodate 900 11-16 year olds, with provision for up to 250 sixth form places. Students will benefit from the very latest facilities including ICT suites, a learning resource centre, a multi use main hall, two football pitches, cricket pitch, hockey pitch, six tennis courts, two five-a-side pitches and a four court sports hall.



Barnsley Academy

ULT Board Members:

Rt Hon Dame Angela Rumbold (Chair) DBE; The Rt Rev & Rt Hon The Lord Carey of Clifton;
Mr J H W Beardwell; Mr Geoffrey Davies; Mrs Fiona Gilmore; Mr Edward Gould; Sir Anthony Greener;
Sir Ewan Harper CBE; Mr Alan Millward (Manchester Chairman); Mr John O'Farrell (Lambeth Chairman);
Mr Richard Tice (Northampton Chairman)



United Learning Trust
The best in everyone

For further details about anything in this newsletter please contact:

United Learning Trust
23 Chapel Street, Titchmarsh
Northamptonshire NN14 3DA
Telephone (01832) 735105
Email: admin@ult.org.uk / www.ult.org.uk
ULT charity number: 1093277