

# Case Study: London Academy of Excellence

## Executive Summary

London Academy of Excellence is a proposed Free School for Sixth Form pupils (Years 12 and 13) in Newham, East London. The proposal is led by independent school Brighton College, working in partnership with other independent and state schools including Kingsford Community School. London Academy of Excellence seeks to overcome educational inequality by preparing London's brightest, but least privileged, teenagers for entry to Britain's top universities. The London Academy of Excellence aims to support students from deprived backgrounds to pursue those A levels identified by top universities as the most desirable, giving them the expert guidance to make the best possible choices about university. LAE hopes to start with between 150 and 200 Year 12 pupils in September 2012.

The idea for the London Academy of Excellence has its roots in a partnership between Brighton College and Kingsford Community School that has been in place for the past four years, with Brighton College providing scholarships for sixth-form students. The Free School programme provided the impetus to embark on a much bigger enterprise to raise the aspirations of 200 pupils per year. This is not just a Brighton College initiative, but a project that will be undertaken in tandem with other schools.

The LAE group's approach to the application was to appoint a Research Assistant to work on the application in collaboration with members of the team. Kingsford Community School managed the process of establishing parental demand.

Even with the help of an experienced school bursar, the financial section of the application posed a challenge because the group found it difficult to estimate the actual cost of various aspects of the physical plant and to know precisely how many staff would be needed for each particular subject.

The LAE group expect that the most difficult part of the Free School process is yet to come, with the greatest challenge being the process of generating sponsorship to enhance the level of education offered to pupils. The advice they would offer to someone considering a Free School application is to ensure that they have a clear vision for the school and know exactly what they are trying to achieve. For LAE, this vision is the provision of an academic timetable for able pupils.

The following case study looks at the vision for the school, the proposed Governors, the nature of relationships with other schools, media interest, the plans for recruiting a suitable founding head, the preferred site, and the response to criticisms about academic selection.