

Falmer Academy

NEWSLETTER

September 08



A great educational future for our area

You may already know about the proposed Falmer Academy - a new school proposed to be built on the site of the current Falmer High School. This newsletter aims to give you the facts about developments so far and answer questions raised about it.

After consultation with the local community in May and June, the proposed Academy is now in its feasibility phase, looking at its organisation, curriculum and finances. Brighton and Hove City Council is undertaking the second phase of the consultation and is seeking your views. The proposal has the backing of the Headteacher and the governing body of Falmer High School and the three ward councillors, Mo Marsh, Anne Meadows and Maria Caulfield.



They said: 'We are all right behind the proposed Academy. Like Stuart McLaughlin, the head of Falmer High School, we believe it will provide the very best education and opportunities for pupils which is what they and their families deserve.'

Firstly, you might want to know what an Academy is. Academies are free, government-funded schools that provide a fresh approach to learning and state-of-the-art facilities to raise standards of achievement among all students whatever their abilities. There are over 80 Academies already open around the country, offering students and local communities greater learning opportunities.

Each Academy is individual and develops to reflect local needs; each also has a sponsor who provides additional funding and expertise to enrich the experience of all the students. Falmer Academy is sponsored by local entrepreneur Rod Aldridge OBE. You can read more about him overleaf.

The need for the proposed Falmer Academy is simple - to transform an old school into one that can offer the highest possible educational standards for all its students - from Maths, English and Sciences to the proposed Academy's Entrepreneurship and Sport specialisms - preparing young people for work and further and higher education.

Falmer High School has been improving over the years and becoming an Academy will accelerate that achievement. A more flexible curriculum, better resources and up-to-date facilities will enable staff to give each student every chance to succeed.

The proposed Falmer Academy will:

- offer 900 places for students aged 11-16 as well as 250 sixth-form places.
- be an all-inclusive school and accept students from all backgrounds.
- open in a new state-of-the-art, environmentally-friendly building in 2010.

As well as helping students achieve their best, the Academy will bring benefits to local people, businesses and community groups through:

- new sports facilities and meeting spaces for community groups
- a parents' council, so they can have a say on the new school
- encouraging businesses into the Academy so students can get direct work experience
- breakfast, lunch and other school clubs, holiday and weekend activities.

For more information on the proposed Academy, turn over to our Academy Q&A or visit www.proposedfalmeracademy.org or email info@proposedfalmeracademy.org

Your questions answered

Q. Who will run the new Academy?

A. It will be run by a Principal and a governing body. The Principal will be responsible for the Academy's day-to-day running.

Q. If the school is already doing well, why make it an Academy?

A. Falmer High School is currently an improving school but with Academy status it will have the financial and learning resources to offer students the chance to achieve even more. Government reports show that exam results in Academies are improving more rapidly than average.

Q. How will the students' learning be affected by the building work?

A. The construction programme, starting in summer 2009 and finishing in 2011, has been planned in stages to avoid disrupting students' learning and all students can stay at the school during the construction period.

Q. My child attends the Swan Centre, what will happen to it?

A. It will be housed in new purpose-built facilities in the Academy. All students attending the Centre will automatically transfer there if their parents wish.

Q. How will places to the new Academy be allocated?

A. There will be no form of testing to get a place and all students who attend Falmer High School and those offered a place for September 2009 can transfer to the Academy if their parents wish. The Academy admissions arrangements are the same as those for all local secondary schools within Brighton and Hove.

Q. What will happen to the existing teachers and staff at Falmer High School?

A. All school staff have the right to transfer to the new Academy and retain their terms and conditions of employment. In line with national requirements the Principal's position will be advertised and subject to an open competition.

Q. Will the teaching be different from any other schools?

A. High standards of teaching will be at the centre of Academy life and it will offer a broad and rich curriculum and like all secondary schools will teach English, Maths, Science and ICT. Entrepreneurship and Sport will be its specialisms and these will be supported by brand new facilities and information technology systems.

Q. How will the new Academy be funded?

A. The Government is backing the project with £26+ million. Sponsor Rod Aldridge is offering funding of £2 million for extra programmes in sports, business and entrepreneurship and wider learning opportunities for the local community. The Academy will be free and your council tax will not go up because of it.

Q. Will the Academy have any religious affiliations?

A. No it is not a faith school. It will welcome students from all faiths and none.

Q. What happens if the Academy doesn't go ahead?

A. The existing High School would stay open in its existing buildings.

Giving something back

Born in Hove, Academy sponsor Rod Aldridge first worked as a post boy with the local council but went on to have a very successful business career. Now retired, through his charity, the Aldridge Foundation he focuses his work by helping young people 'unlock and maximise their potential so they can shape their own futures'.



As well as sponsoring the Falmer Academy, via the Aldridge Foundation, Rod also sponsors the Darwen Aldridge Community Academy in Blackburn and has also worked with the Prince's Trust xl Programme which helps bridge the gap between employers and students with a focus on practical learning.

'My vision for the Academy is to enable local young people to learn through innovative methods and new technology in an inspiring environment,' Rod explains. 'In this constantly changing world, being able to solve problems is key. That's one of the reasons we chose Entrepreneurship and Sport as the Academy specialisms to help our students develop these skills and a determination to succeed.'

'I'm committed to working with students, parents, staff and local people and using my business and leadership skills to ensure the Academy is at the heart of the community's regeneration, delivering educational, economic and social benefits for the area.'



Exceptional education for all

'Falmer Academy will provide the local community with a learning experience of the highest quality - something it thoroughly deserves. It will not only build

on Falmer's recent success, but catapult the school forward to provide an exceptional education for all our students that will find ways to unlock their talent and potential.'

Stuart McLaughlin, Headteacher, Falmer High School

For further information:

visit www.proposedfalmeracademy.org or email info@proposedfalmeracademy.org

Messages can be left on 020 7924 5109