

# Westminster Education Forum Keynote Seminar: Academies and 'free schools' - the next steps for policy

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010

Venue: British Medical Association, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP

Agenda subject to change

- 8.45 - 9.00 Registration
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chairman's opening remarks**  
**Dr John Pugh MP**
- 9.05 - 9.20 **The Academies programme: is it delivering value for money?**  
**Angela Hands**, Director, National Audit Office
- 9.20 - 10.05 **Academies: latest thinking on performance, efficiency and the impact on the wider community**  
*Themes: An evaluation of the programme so far. Generally, have academies been successful in driving up school standards and improving pupil attainment? Is there such a thing as a uniform 'academy effect'? Is the programme offering good value for money? Should alternative methods of school improvement be considered in addition to academies? What is the current state of morale amongst staff working in academies? How are neighbouring schools and local communities affected by the establishment of an academy?*  
**David Hudson**, Headteacher, Wickersley School and Sports College, Rotherham  
**Phil Hearne**, Executive Director, Northumberland Church of England Academy  
**John Bangs**, Visiting Professor, Institute of Education, University of London  
**Bill Watkin**, Operational Director of Partnership and Performance Networks, Specialist Schools and Academies Trust  
Questions and comments from the floor with **Angela Hands**, Director, National Audit Office
- 10.05 - 10.10 **Chairman's closing remarks**  
**Dr John Pugh MP**
- 10.10 - 10.30 Coffee
- 10.30 - 10.35 **Chairman's opening remarks**  
**Vernon Coaker MP**, Shadow Minister for Children and Learners
- 10.35 - 11.25 **The future of the academies programme**  
*Themes: Will a rapid expansion of the academies programme impact on the quality of the scheme and the recruitment of potential sponsors and governors? What are the advantages and disadvantages of allowing all schools, including primaries, to apply for academy status? What is the likely impact of allowing all schools rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted to be fast-tracked to academy status? Should 'outstanding' schools continue to be inspected by Ofsted? How might the academies funding agreement change with the expansion of the programme? How can a continued rise in standards be ensured for all schools, both inside and outside the academy system?*  
**Helen Hyde**, Headmistress, Watford Grammar School for Girls  
**Alasdair Smith**, National Secretary, Anti Academies Alliance  
**Lucy Heller**, Managing Director, ARK Schools  
**Sarah Hohler**, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, Kent County Council  
**Geoffrey Davies**, Consultant, Lewis Silkin and Director, United Learning Trust  
**Emma Knights**, Chief Executive, National Governors' Association  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.25 - 11.30 **Chairman's closing remarks**  
**Vernon Coaker MP**, Shadow Minister for Children and Learners
- 11.30 - 11.35 **Chairman's opening remarks**  
**Gavin Barwell MP**, Member, Science and Technology Committee
- 11.35 - 12.25 **The establishment of 'free schools'**  
*Themes: How should 'free schools' be funded and managed? What is their likely impact on neighbouring schools and how should they be held accountable in order to ensure they are conforming to national standards? The challenges of continuity as those involved in the process move on. Are 'free schools' likely to achieve their key goals of 'improving educational attainment' and 'offering a wider choice for parents'?*  
**Dr Susanne Wiborg**, Senior Lecturer, Comparative Education and Head of Department of International and Lifelong Education, Institute of Education, University of London,  
**Toby Young**, Journalist and Commentator  
**Bob Johnson**, National Official, Salaries, Pensions and Conditions of Service, NASUWT  
**Graham Burns**, Director and Solicitor, TPP Law  
**Anders Hultin**, Managing Director, School Improvement, Pearson UK and Co-founder, Kunskapsskolan  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.25 - 12.55 **The current political context**  
**David Jeffrey**, Deputy Director, Academies and Free Schools Policy, Department for Education  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 12.50 **Chairman's and Westminster Education Forum thanks and closing remarks**  
**Gavin Barwell MP**, Member, Science and Technology Committee  
**Sean Cudmore**, Senior Producer, Westminster Education Forum