



DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
Expression of Interest for Inclusion in the Building Schools for the Future
Programme

November 2008

Contact details

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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 There are currently 41 schools in Darlington, comprising of 2 nurseries, 3 infant schools, 3 junior schools, 24 primary schools, 7 secondary schools (including 1 Academy), 1 special school and 1 pupil referral unit (PRU).
- 1.2 By September 2009, 4 of the Borough's 7 Secondary Schools will be in new premises suitable for the 21st Century. The Authority's Primary School stock is in relatively good order and is being further improved with investment through the Primary Capital Programme. The special school is a new build and the PRU is in significantly remodelled premises.
- 1.3 Darlington can make a powerful case for investment. The case can be summarised as follows:
- Our top performing schools are working with other schools to raise standards;
 - We can deliver a programme which raises the regional skill level considerably over the longer term;
 - We have been an underperforming authority but we now have a real basis to significantly raise attainment levels;
 - We can undertake all preliminary work and procurement quickly because we have already worked with the framework partnership to procure an Academy and have an experienced capital planning team;
 - Only 3 secondary schools require refurbishment/rebuilding – the other 4 have been funded;
 - The work can be carried out quickly because there are no reorganisation issues and no relocation issues to resolve.

2. **Strategic Education Plans**

- 2.1 The introduction to the 2007 review of the Darlington Children and Young People's Plan sets the vision for our schools:

'Darlington has an ambitious programme for Children's Services. Within 2 years we expect to have a 70% GCSE pass rate in the Borough and all schools scoring 50% plus. We want our schools to offer the best teaching in the North East and to encourage more young people to continue their education.'

- 2.2 This is coupled with a stated ambition of having 7 secondary schools of choice in the Borough. Darlington is the third smallest unitary authority, with 90% of its children living in the small urban centre of the Borough. Parents are supported to exercise their preference for a school and have no barriers to access. We have also supported the development of alternative forms of governance, including an academy and a foundation school. Our aim is for schools to be more self-governing and operating within a mutually beneficial trust, such as a co-operative or an unincorporated association and this is described in more detail, below.

- 2.3 Our strategy for transformation and improvement in the secondary sector is linked to Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy, which contains a Borough wide commitment to overcoming barriers to educational achievement through tackling poverty, disparity in performance across settings and groups and supported school leadership.
- 2.4 Schools serve as significant parts of the infrastructure for support for families in the more deprived areas and are committed partners in the broader economic, regeneration and social inclusion agenda. We believe, all partners are committed to delivering an agreed set of outcomes, which include improved attainment for all pupils, accelerated improvements for those living in the 30% most deprived areas, a reduction in the percentage of 17 year olds who are disengaged at age 17 and a reduction in child poverty levels.
- 2.5 The Local Authority is the most improved authority in the country for tackling secondary school persistent absentees and the third most improved authority for pupils achieving 5 GCSE grades at A*-C. Exclusions from school have more than halved. Of course, such a rapid rate of progress is not sustainable and in future years progress will be more incremental as the Local Authority secures its position as a top quartile performer.
- 2.6 We are transforming 14-19 learning. Our recent JAR inspection report complimented the progress made by the 14-19 trust and partners. Because the Borough is small, with a compact urban core, we believe that we can maximize the opportunity for all secondary students to benefit from improved facilities, even in the schools that are not included in this BSF bid.

3. **Our Vision for the Future**

- 3.1 Our vision for the future is that pupil learning will be enhanced by creating spaces that encourage different ways of learning, including learning through participation, the use of new technologies and by creating safe environments in which students can interact with a range of other students, including those belonging to other schools and colleges. Wherever possible, learning should also be carried out through participation in authentic tasks, which support some form of real life impact, such as enterprise, sustainability or community development.
- 3.2 Darlington schools are committed to personalized learning and we will use the Building Schools for the Future initiative to build virtual workplaces where learning can take place any time, anywhere. We want to create new, exciting, brave and bold learning environments in which young people will thrive by developing new competencies, new learning relationships and use new and different tools and resources to enhance their progress and amplify their motivation.

- 3.3 For some young people there will be barriers to benefiting immediately from this style of learning, such as underdeveloped social and emotional skills. Provision will include scope to deliver programmes for all learners, at whatever stage of development and maturity and include the opportunity for students to move between appropriate levels of course – with progression along the continuum just as accessible as regression where individual circumstances demonstrate this to be appropriate.
- 3.4 Darlington’s PRU is now providing sound educational opportunities for young people and has been taken out of special measures. Improvements for the young people registered with the PRU include the setting up of a Key Stage 4 Engagement Centre in a protected environment away from the main building. The KS4 Engagement Centre is providing highly personalized and alternative educational packages, to meet the need of young people with medical conditions, phobias or aptitudes not covered by the standard curriculum. The KS4 Engagement Centre works cooperatively with all secondary schools. A premises upgrade is required to allow for co-location of PCT and CAMHS services, facilitating joint working.
- 3.5 Our Local Area Agreement has targets to improve the skill levels at age 19 and to reduce the percentage of unplaced 17 year olds. Our educational vision will also complement our vision to tackle the cycle of poverty - which requires us to ensure that the curriculum supports the transition into education, training or employment and responds to the local concern that employers report that some of their vacancies are unfilled because local applicants do not have the basic social, emotional and interpersonal skills necessary for the posts.

4. **[schools@onedarlington](#)**

- 4.1 The notion of [schools@onedarlington](#) has been used as a vehicle for transforming teaching and learning and as a way of ensuring that the standards for all are brought up to the standards of the best. The strategy is centred on four themes:
- Joint Decision making
 - Shared concept of Standards and Assurance
 - Common and agreed Policies and Procedures
 - Joint Training and Development
- 4.2 The curriculum enrichment, the possibilities for development and innovation and the commitment to openness, sharing of ideas and commissioning to meet local need will ensure we can help schools in more challenging circumstances, particularly those identified as being in an Ofsted or National Challenge category. Through the notion of [schools@onedarlington](#) leadership and curriculum assistance as already been channelled into our one secondary school placed in National Challenge.

5. **Darlington's Expression of Interest**

- 5.1 Four of the seven secondary schools in the town have already been rebuilt or substantially refurbished in the last three years. The Authority has used diverse funding streams, including Targeted Capital Bids, Private Finance Initiative and the Academies programme to update and refresh schools that were neither sufficient nor suitable to meet pupil needs. **Branksome, Longfield and Hurworth** schools, serving different urban and rural localities, and with different levels of deprivation, need to be brought up to the standard of the rest of the secondary school stock if their pupils are to gain from the high aspirations we have for improvement and achievement. Our expression of interest covers these three schools, which are now our major priority for improvement and are the only three remaining secondary schools that require investment in Darlington.
- 5.2 Modernization of our schools will facilitate the collaboration, personalization and use of modern learning technologies we see as central to our secondary transformation strategy. Through the use of BSF all pupils in Darlington, whatever their level of advantage or deprivation, whatever their need for inclusion and whatever their need for special access, will be able to achieve their educational potential in their neighbourhood setting and be encouraged to stay in education or training until they find suitable jobs and career opportunities as they grow into adulthood.

6. **School Organization Issues**

- 6.1 The autumn 2008 census shows that there are just over 15,000 children and young people on school registers. There are over 5,900 pupils attending secondary schools. Secondary surplus places run at 4% and four secondary schools are regularly oversubscribed. We predict a small fall in secondary numbers until 2014, followed by a rapid increase by 2019, when we predict a sustained secondary population of 6,000 pupils.
- 6.2 Projections of pupil data collected from the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit and analysis of school census data shows that there is and will be a continued need for seven secondary schools in Darlington.
- 6.3 The demographics of the area are well served by schools in their current locations. The impact of parental preference and of local demographics indicate that there need to be an upward adjustment in pupil numbers at Hurworth and a reduction in surplus places at Branksome.
- 6.4 All schools are located on land owned by the Council, there are no covenants restricting usage for educational purposes. There are no plans to merge or close any schools, nor to make immediate changes of a significant character, requiring statutory procedures and the publication of public notices.

7. **Consultation**

There has been wide consultation on our strategy for transformation and improvement, which we have captured under the name: schools@onedarlington. After meetings with our secondary heads, a conference in July 2008 provided the opportunity for 34 Heads, 28 Governors, the Leader and lead portfolio holders of the Council, the Chief Executive and senior council officers to meet and discuss the way forward for transforming schools and transforming lives. Discussion at the conference was informed by inputs from Sir Bruce Liddington and senior staff from recently re-built and re-established schools – like The Bristol Academy. The conference has been followed up by a series of meetings with secondary Headteachers to discuss how each school can best implement the educational vision for the Borough.

8. **Readiness to Deliver**

- 8.1 There has been wide consultation on our strategy for transformation and improvement, which we have captured under the name: schools@onedarlington. After meetings with our secondary heads, a conference in July 2008 provided the opportunity for 34 Heads, 28 Governors, the Leader and lead portfolio holders of the Council, the Chief Executive and senior council officers to meet and discuss the way forward for transforming schools and transforming lives. Discussion at the conference was informed by inputs from Sir Bruce Liddington and senior staff from recently re-built and re-established schools – like The Bristol Academy. The conference has been followed up by a series of meetings with secondary Headteachers to discuss how each school can best implement the educational vision for the Borough.
- 8.2 The new building for the Eastbourne CE Academy is under construction. The Council has worked in close partnership with the academy sponsors and with P4S and is one of only two Authorities in the country to have an Academy under the ‘accelerated programme’ scheduled to open in September 2009. The Academy was procured through the framework partnership and the new primary school contract has been awarded to another of the firms included in the framework partnership. The Authority has explored different procurement methods for the construction of the new school and the building will meet exacting BREEAM standards (the design indicates that the school should receive an ‘excellent’ BREEAM rating, being virtually carbon neutral).
- 8.3 These projects mean that Members and Officers in Darlington are very familiar with the challenges, planning procedures, consultation mechanisms and legal skill sets that are required to complete large capital projects successfully and within budget.

Given the above, we would seek to commence BSF project work on 1st April 2009.

9. **Summary**

- Our top performing schools are working with other schools to raise standards;
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Building Schools for the Future Project Scope - initial project for local authorities yet to join the programme

Local Authority	Darlington Borough Council
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Top priority project

DCSF number	School Name	Current school type - Sept 2008	% GCSE A* to C inc Eng, Maths (2008)	Current number of pupils on roll			Current capacity		Current surplus %	Projected number of pupils on roll			Projected capacity		Projected surplus %	Projected special resource provision NOR	Investment Proposals under BSF	Proposed school type post BSF
				Aged 0-10 Sept 2008	Aged 11-16 Sept 2008	Post-16 Sept 2008	Current capacity (age 11-16) Sept 2008	Current capacity (post-16) Sept 2008		Aged 0-10 Sept 2018	Aged 11-16 Sept 2018	Post-16 Sept 2018	Projected capacity (age 11-16) - 2018	Projected capacity (post-16) - 2018				
8414286	Branksome Comprehensive	Community	38.6%	0	626	0	900	0	30.4%	0	750	0	750	0	0.0%	45	70%+ new build on existing site	Community
8414221	Hurworth School	Foundation	65.9%	0	656	0	635	0	-3.3%	0	635	0	635	0	0.0%	10	70%+ new build on existing site	Foundation
8414287	Longfield School	Community	48.9%	0	908	0	900	0	-0.9%	0	900	0	900	0	0.0%	0	70%+ new build on existing site	Community
8414228	Hummersknott School	Community	62%	0	1222	0	1200	0	-1.8%	0	1200	0	1200	0	0.0%	0	0%-20% new build	Community
8414603	Carmel RC College	Voluntary aided	73%	0	917	252	900	245	-2.1%	0	900	245	900	252	0.6%	0	0%-20% new build	Voluntary aided
8414285	Houghton School	Community	19%	0	893	0	900	0	0.8%	0	900	0	900	0	0.0%	0	No new work - ICT only	Community
				0	5222	252	5435	245	3.6%	0	5285	245	5285	252	0.1%	55		

Explanatory notes:

School priority	The top five priority schools in your authority yet to benefit from BSF
DCSF number	The official DCSF number for each school
School name	The current name of the school
Current school type	The type of school
%GCSE A* to C	The % of pupils achieving at least 5 A* to C GCSEs, including English and Maths in 2008
Current number on roll (aged 0-10)	The current number of pupils aged 0-10 on roll at all-through schools.
Current number on roll (aged 11-16)	The current number of pupils aged 11-16 on roll at the school.
Current number on roll (aged post-16)	The current number of pupils aged 16 and above on roll at the school.

Current capacity (post-16)	The current capacity at the school for post-16 pupils
Projected number on roll (aged 0-10)	The projected number of pupils aged 0-10 on roll at all-through schools in 2018.
Projected number on roll (aged 11-16)	The projected number of pupils aged 11-16 on roll at the school in 2018.
Projected number on roll (aged post-16)	The projected number of pupils aged 16 and above on roll at the school in 2018.
Projected capacity (aged 11-16)	The projected capacity at the school for pupils aged 11-16 in 2018
Projected capacity (post-16)	The projected capacity at the school for post-16 pupils in 2018
Projected special resource provision	The projected number of places required in a special resource unit at the mainstream school in 2018
Investment proposals under BSF	Your investment proposals, including amount of new build