



ENGLAND'S SCHOOLS: NOT OPEN FOR BUSINESS

don't sell education short



ATL is the union for education professionals across the UK. Active in the maintained, independent and post-16 sectors, we use our members' experiences to influence education policy, and we work with government and employers to secure fair pay and working conditions. From early years to HE, teachers to support staff, lecturers to leaders, we support and represent our members throughout their career.



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Introduction

This directory lists the major organisations seeking a radically expanded role in the management of maintained schools in England. The list is necessary as an aid to understanding the unspoken education policy of the government, which is to undo a basic principle of the 1944 Education Act that has lasted for more than half a century.

The school system was often described as a national service, locally administered. The local element was the local authority, part of the local democratic state. With the introduction of local management by the 1988 Education Reform Act, the nature of local administration changed but remained essential – or so it seemed. Repeated predictions of the demise of local authorities proved unfounded.

Then this principle was breached by the introduction of academies, which effectively are administered by the Department for Education (DfE), although former Secretary of State for Education Ed Balls admitted to the Select Committee that this proved impossible in practice – “Carlisle is quite a long way from London”. Now the coalition government aspires for all schools to become academies, arguing that they will benefit from independence. However, Michael Gove, the current Secretary of State for Education, knows that schools are not large enough organisations to be completely self-sufficient, and he also knows he cannot administer thousands of schools from London.

Mr Gove does not trust local authorities but he does know some people he can trust, and they are listed in these pages. Some of the organisations listed are charities, some are private companies and others are huge multinational PLCs. They share the belief that they can offer expertise in the kinds of services previously provided to schools by local or central government, and that demand for their services is about to take off. This directory describes the kinds of services on offer. Already, prospective ‘new wave’ academies are being approached by these organisations, which seek to build chains of schools to which they can offer services with economies of scale. This market is already important enough to support two publications, *Education investor* and *The assignment report*, the latter describing UK education as a £100 billion market. Many of the organisations listed are linked with the New Schools Network (NSN). This is a charity that does not reveal its funding sources but was awarded £500,000 by the DfE in June 2010. The NSN’s director, Rachel Wolf, is a former adviser to Michael Gove.

Mr Gove says he has no problem with private sector entry into state education, and by this means is trying to achieve what previous privatising governments never dreamed of. According to Gove, the competing chains will force up quality, despite the lack of evidence that markets ever do that. In its 2010 report *Fulfilling potential, the business role in education*, the Confederation of British Industry has openly backed this development. England's schools – a bastion of the community impulse, a haven of ethical values, a profit-motive-free zone – will go private in a trice. And these organisations will rake off a 'surplus' that should be spent on our pupils.

What's more, this policy is a huge exception to the rule that he who pays the piper calls the tune. In this case, taxpayers provide the funds for these schools but lose all democratic accountability. Without a geographical base, these chains will be in no position to deal with local disputes about the provision of schooling – and neither will any other public body. Where will a parent go if there is no school place, or if no school will take on their child's special needs? We shall have, if the government is successful, a national service privately administered.

ATL does not believe this is morally right or effective. ATL believes in schools as a public service under direct local democratic control, administered by people who know the schools, the area and the local people. And most of all, ATL does not believe that profits should be made from running state schools.

Martin Johnson, deputy general secretary, ATL

Potential 'privateers'

ABC Academies

Type: charity

Key personnel

Dick Ewen (former headteacher, Islington Arts and Media School) leads ABC Academies with a team of a headteacher and three business people volunteers.

Financial background

No financial information publicly available at the time of going to press.

Services provided

ABC Academies intends to establish itself as a charity. It hopes to run up to eight free primary schools in west London from 2011.

Comment

ABC Academies' website states: "Our schools will be independent, high quality and private but completely free to attend as they will be paid for by the government." The organisation leafleted the Shepherd's Bush area, where it hopes to open its first free school, resulting in about 80 parents signing up to the scheme.

Amey

Type: PLC

Key personnel

Non-executive chairman: Sir Richard Mottram
Chief executive: Mel Ewell

Financial background

Revenue: £1.49 billion (31 Dec 2008)
Operating profit: £95.7 million (31 Dec 2008)

Services provided

Part of Ferrovial, one of the world's leading infrastructure companies, Amey works in more than 200 locations in the UK, in both public and private sectors: aviation, central government, defence, local government, rail and strategic highways. Within education, it has provided infrastructure and support services for the former Department for Children, Schools and Families and local authorities.

It has 10 major education partnerships and contracts for services ranging from school improvement and special educational needs services to the delivery and management of new schools, including cleaning, catering, janitorial, security and building and grounds maintenance.

Its catering brand is to deliver healthy school meals.

Comment

Amey withdrew from sponsorship of Unity City Academy in Middlesbrough in 2008, in which it had invested £2 million. In 2007, the academy was taken out of special measures.

Appleyards

Type: private company

Key personnel

Non-executive chairman: Bob Heathfield
Chief executive: Colin Morrell
Director of education services: Ros Fox
Dr Kate Reynolds, formerly director of education and children's services with Mouchel, spearheads its strategic business development.

Financial background

Turnover: £13.4 million (31 Mar 2009)
Operating profit: £0.6 million (31 Mar 2009)

Services provided

Appleyards provides consultancy and support services to the public, private and third sectors in the commercial, leisure, health, and government and local authority sectors.

It provides education consultancy at every level of the education system from nursery to further education, including: Building Schools for the Future consultancy, academies and trust schools consultancy, and education project management.

It runs HEADLINE, a new training programme for school senior leadership teams.

It has worked with sponsors and the former Department for Children, Schools and Families to open 9 academies across the country, and is currently working on a further 11 to be delivered before September 2011.

Comment

Appleyards is currently offering help to local authorities, schools, colleges or universities, charities and parents wanting to set up free schools. This includes establishing a business plan and helping to write a winning application, providing help in identifying sources of funding, determining the curriculum, recruitment and ICT, and helping with marketing of the new school.

ARK (Absolute Return for Kids)

Type: charity

Key personnel

Founder: Arpad Busson – chairman of EIM hedge fund

Financial background

ARK
Income: £19.4 million (31 Aug 2009)
Retained for future use: £5.7 million

ARK Academies
Income: £81 million (31 Aug 2009)
Retained for future use: £46.9 million

Services provided

ARK is an international “philanthropic co-operative” children's charity that has worked on health, welfare and education projects in southern Africa, India, eastern Europe and the UK.

ARK runs eight academies in London, Birmingham and Portsmouth, modelled on American charter schools. It plans to add four more by 2012.

It sells ARK Plus academic and behavioural support for programmes for Year 7 pupils.

ARK has approached the New Schools Network to express its interest in offering help to parents and teachers who want to set up new schools.

Comment

Prior to its entry into the country, ARK had no previous experience of running education services in the UK.

ARK trustee Jennifer Moses was due to work as adviser to Gordon Brown in 2009 but had to give up days before starting the post when her husband, Ron Beller, lost more than £29 million due to the crash of his hedge fund, Peloton Brothers, in the credit crunch. She is described as a “libertarian who supports private money in [the] state education system”. (*Daily Mail*, 5 Mar 2008)

BPP Holdings

Type: PLC, subsidiary company to Apollo Global

Key personnel

Chairman: Greg Cappelli
Chief executive: Carl Lygo

Financial background

Turnover: £7.8 million (31 Aug 2009)
Operating profit: £1.5 million (31 Aug 2009)

Services provided

BPP Holdings is owned by Apollo Global. Apollo Global is a \$1 billion joint venture between the Apollo Group and private equity firm the Carlyle Group established in September 2007.

Apollo Global is an educational investment company, formed to make investments in the international education services sector. It runs Learning Media, its publishing division and, in July 2010, the BPP Law and Business School was granted a charter to become a university college.

Comment

In the USA, the Apollo Group runs the University of Phoenix. Apollo Global's aim is to set up a global education network. Its 2009 acquisition of BPP Holdings was to serve as a platform from which to operate in the UK and throughout Europe.

Cambridge Education

Type: owned by Mott MacDonald Group, a private limited company

Key personnel

Managing director: Brian Oakley-Smith

Financial background

Mott MacDonald Group
Gross revenue: £1.01 billion (31 Dec 2009)
Group operating profit: £48.1 million (31 Dec 2009)

Services provided

Cambridge Education is the trading name of the education and children's services arm of the Mott MacDonald Group, a global, independent, health management and construction consultancy that is privately owned and operates worldwide. Cambridge Education Foundation, its not-for-profit arm, is a specialist education consultancy providing education services to government, public sector organisations and development partners, in the UK and internationally.

Its UK portfolio includes the running of all education services for the London Borough of Islington and project managing academies.

Its 2009 annual report states that it also offers a one-stop shop for school development in conjunction with its parent company, including detailed design and development of the building, project and construction management, and facilities management.

Comment

Its website offers support to any school wanting to be an academy and to anyone needing help once their academy is up and running.

Its website also states that it offers a complete package of support for anyone wishing to set up a free school and will help with identifying a site, the application, developing a business case, delivering the education vision and creating a sustainable school community.

The Capita Group

Type: PLC

Key personnel

Chief executive: Paul Pindar

Financial background

Revenue: £26.9 billion (31 Dec 2009)

Operating profit: £3.5 billion (31 Dec 2009)

Services provided

Capita is the UK's leading provider of business process outsourcing and business transformation services, offering expert resources and support, ICT, specialist software and information management systems, and property consultancy. Major shareholders include some of the largest investment management companies, including Baillie Gifford & Co, Fidelity, Capital Research Global Investors and BlackRock Advisors (UK) Ltd.

Education currently accounts for 13 per cent of its business. Its education software is used in more than 21,000 schools. It provides a fully managed ICT service to 25 secondary schools in Wolverhampton worth £34 million. It works in partnership with Carillion on Building Schools for the Future (BSF) projects at Durham County Council and Rochdale Metropolitan Council. Its recent acquisition of Ramseys added further BSF partnerships including: Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, Manchester City Council, Westminster City Council, Nottingham City Council and the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest, Greenwich and Tower Hamlets.

Comment

Capita's website claimed:

"Most establishments use one or more of our services and we deliver core administration services to the [former] Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). There is considerable opportunity to continue strengthening and broadening our relationships.

"Following the end of the National Strategies programme in 2011, the Government intends to develop an 'assured suppliers' market for improvement support to schools. Under this scheme, selected suppliers will be quality assured and accredited by the DCSF. Capita is in a good position to develop a strong presence in this market."

CfBT

Type: charity

Key personnel

Chief executive: Neil McIntosh

Financial background

Total incoming resources: £90.5 million
(31 Mar 2009)

Net incoming resources: £4.4 million
(31 Mar 2009)

Services provided

CfBT is a registered charity that undertakes education consultancy, research and support services in the UK and internationally. All of its funds are used for educational purposes, including £1 million reinvestment in practice-based educational research every year. Its annual report states that it will not invest in companies involved in military or armaments manufacture, pornography, gambling and tobacco.

In 2008/09 CfBT owned and managed seven schools in the UK. It provided school improvement management services and consultancy support to local authorities in East Sussex in 2008/09.

Comment

CfBT believes in diversity in education provision and in giving consumers a real choice. Its 2008/09 annual report said it would pursue opportunities to expand its portfolio of schools as it reaffirmed its aim to be a major provider of state-funded schooling and to consolidate its position in fee-funded independent schooling.

The New Schools Network lists CfBT as having approached it expressing an interest in being involved with free schools.

Cognita Group

Type: private limited company with share capital

Key personnel

Founder and chairman: Chris Woodhead
(former chief inspector of schools)

Property director and chief operating officer:
Dean Villa (previously property director of GEMS)

Financial background

Cognita Ltd, subsidiary to Cognita Holdings Ltd

Turnover: £0.8 million (31 Aug 2009)

Loss before interest and tax: £3.6 million
(31 Aug 2009)

Cognita Holdings Ltd Group

Turnover: £138.6 million (31 Aug 2009)

Operating profit: £3.9 million (31 Aug 2009)

Services provided

Formed in 2004 by Chris Woodhead together with Englefield Capital LLP (renamed Bregal Capital LLP in 2010), Cognita specialises in moderately priced private education. It is the largest private operator of schools in the UK.

Its international schools division was created in October 2006. It currently has 52 schools (including nurseries, prep schools, primary and secondary schools) across the UK, Europe and south-east Asia (46 of which are in the UK).

It employs 2,900 teaching and support staff and delivers to more than 15,200 pupils.



Contour Education Services

Type: private limited company

Key personnel

Managing director: Charles Rigby (founder of World Challenge, the leading provider of school expeditions)

Financial background

No financial information publicly available at the time of going to press.

Services provided

Incorporated on 26 January 2010, Contour Education Services supports or takes over the management of failing schools. It builds and manages new schools for both state and independent sectors.

Comment

In early 2009, the media reported that Cognita is planning to more than double the number of schools it runs by 2013. Chris Woodhead said that his firm hopes to be operating 100 schools within the next 4 years, and that it is presently in talks about taking over another 10 or 15 schools.

In April 2010, *The Independent* reported that Chris Woodhead had been urging the Conservatives to include Cognita in its free school plans.

Cognita has approached the New Schools Network to express its interest in offering help to parents and teachers who want to set up new schools.

Comment

Contour Education Services has not yet set up a school. Its website states that “Contour Schools will be inspirational places where students want to be...”

The New Schools Network website includes the company on its list of charities and companies that have approached it to express their interest in offering help to parents and teachers who want to set up new schools.

Managing director Charles Rigby states on Contour’s website that he “understands education and business and is passionate about combining both to improve opportunities for young people”.



E-ACT (Edutrust Academies Charitable Trust)

Type: charity

Key personnel

Chairman: Noorzaman Rashid
Director general: Sir Bruce Liddington

Financial background

Revenue: £15.6 million (31 Aug 2009)
Profit: £2.4 million (31 Aug 2009)

Services provided

E-ACT (established by Lord Bhatia's British Edutrust Foundation and formerly known as Edutrust) runs a chain of eight academies across England and is developing several more.

Comment

In November 2008, the government ordered an inquiry into allegations brought by Edutrust's then chief executive, Ian Comfort, that the charity had mismanaged contracts worth millions of pounds of taxpayers' money.

In March 2009, Lord Bhatia was forced to step down from the board after the government review had found E-ACT had failed to comply with "financial management requirements" and had "inappropriate governance arrangements". According to *The Guardian* (13 Mar, 2009), most of the £70,000 misspend related to excess rent paid to the Ethnic Minority Foundation, of which Bhatia is co-founder and chair. E-ACT also failed to effectively address conflicts of interest, showed poor record keeping and paid for items not "properly chargeable to it". After the review, both Bhatia and BEF no longer had sponsorship control over the running of E-ACT academies but BEF still raised funds on their behalf.

In April 2010, E-ACT whistleblowers disclosed that its directors had claimed thousands of pounds of public money for luxury hotel rooms and long-distance taxi journeys; they also used chauffeur-driven limousines to visit academies around the country. The director general, Sir Bruce Liddington, is paid a salary of £265,000, probably the highest for an education executive in Britain. He claimed £1,436 on deluxe hotel suites for two nights for himself and a colleague, and a senior director repeatedly claimed £250 to take a taxi from Lincolnshire to his home in South Wales. Almost all of E-ACT's funding came from Labour government grants worth approximately £250 million.

E-ACT's website states that it is "...keen to work with parent promoters, community and teacher groups, who have the ambition and drive to establish a new Free School. E-ACT will work with groups to develop the school **they** want, where **they** want it".

EC Harris Group

Type: wholly owned subsidiary of EC Harris LLP

Key personnel

Chief executive: Philip Youell

Financial background

EC Harris LLP

Revenue: £306 million (30 Apr 2009)

Operating profit: £40.7 million (30 Apr 2009)

Services provided

EC Harris is an international built asset consultancy, usually focusing on “the construction, operation, use and ownership of built assets” but now offering “specialised educational and children’s services asset management and consultancy services to all public services and independent sector providers”.

Its Schools Direct Team has more than 100 professionals working on more than 200 individual school projects at any one time from £400 to £40 million.

It has worked on Building Schools for the Future, on 15 Primary Capital Programmes, and on more than 50 academy projects across the UK, giving it “extensive expertise in addressing the needs of independent Academy Trusts”.

Comment

EC Harris has prepared a report on the accommodation costs of free schools, arguing that the costs of refurbishing a building shell would be about a third of the cost of a new building. EC Harris believes that conversion of retail space could take from 20 to 35 weeks and include provision of play areas.

EC Harris has met with Rachel Wolf, head of the New Schools Network. Simon Lucas, head of education at EC Harris, said people were “beating a path” to Wolf’s door, and that he had met with Toby Young, who is planning a free school in Acton, west London, and has done “pro bono” work for him.

Philip Youell, chief executive of EC Harris, is supporting the construction industry’s *Charter 284* campaign for maintaining state spending on construction during the recession.



EdisonLearning

Type: subsidiary of EdisonLearning Inc., incorporated in New York

Key personnel

Managing director: Paul Lincoln

Financial background

No published results in the UK.

Services provided

EdisonLearning (formerly Edison Schools UK) was founded in 2002 to provide frontline school improvement and educational services in the UK.

It provides consultancy services to Building Schools for the Future and academy projects, school trusts, local authorities and others. It undertakes “improvement work with partner schools and school management services”.

EdisonLearning also manages maintained schools, including Turin Grove School in London, and Salisbury School in Enfield (a £1 million contract).

Comment

EdisonLearning Inc. has attracted a lot of criticism in the USA. It is in substantial debt, with only one profitable quarter since its inception, but has still paid large bonuses (up to 275 per cent of an annual salary of at least \$600,000) to its chief executive.

EdisonLearning has “refused to say how much the company earns running schools”, but said “it is a good business model. Low profit and long contracts is the approach.” (*The Guardian*, 8 Oct 2009) The journalist and staunch free school advocate, Toby Young, has been in negotiations with EdisonLearning about managing ‘his’ west London free school.

Fieldwork Education

Type: private equity

Key personnel

Co-founder and managing director of Fieldwork Education: Martin Skelton (previously primary school headteacher and university lecturer on education)

Chief executive of the World Class Learning Group: Marcel van Miert (previously marketing director at the European Business School)

Chairman of Sovereign Capital: John Nash

Partner at Sovereign Capital: Ryan Robson (former Wandsworth Councillor, and member of the Centre for Social Justice’s ‘Educational Failure Working Group’)

Financial background

Turnover: £3.2 million (31 Aug 2008)

Operating profit: £0.6 million (31 Aug 2008)

Services provided

Fieldwork Education is part of the World Class Learning Group (or WCL), a London-based international schools group educating more than 2,000 students at its five British Schools of America and at its Compass International School in Doha, Qatar.

Since 2008, WCL has been backed (owned) by Sovereign Capital, an independent private equity house set up by John Nash in 1988 with £650 million under management. Sovereign invests in entrepreneurial UK businesses, specifically in the service-based sectors of healthcare, education and training, and business support services. Sovereign has held investments in the Alpha Plus Group (an independent schools operator group), the special needs schools group, SENAD, and in esg and Paragon, both training providers.

Fieldwork Education is an international provider of learning-focused services and products, working in four areas: school management services, international primary curriculum, professional development, and assessment and evaluation. It runs Shell's international schools and sells its international primary curriculum to more than 500 schools in 50 countries.

Comment

John Nash is former chairman of the British Venture Capital Association, former board member of the Centre for Policy Studies think-tank, Conservative party donor and member of Chancellor George Osborne's 'independent challenge group', which has a remit to 'question the unquestionable' in the Treasury's austerity drive. He sponsors Pimlico Academy in south London via Future, a charity for the "underprivileged young". When Westminster Council announced that Sovereign Capital was to sponsor the new Pimlico academy, protesters occupied the lobby of Sovereign Capital in protest.

Sovereign Capital says: "The education market is one with high barriers to entry and strong regulation while the training sector remains highly fragmented and, as a market with priority state funding, is forecast to grow substantially throughout the next decade."

It also states: "There are significant opportunities for further organic growth at British schools by expanding pupil capacity in addition to Buy & Build prospects in the fragmented, international market."

Fieldwork Education already offers a schools start-up service. It says: "We help new schools begin and we provide the educational management to our own schools and to other schools around the world. Our service is dedicated to providing schools with the systems and structures that will ensure a focus on learning."

Fieldwork Education is listed on the New Schools Network website as one of the charities and companies which have approached the New Schools Network to express their interest in offering help to parents and teachers who want to set up new schools.

GEMS (Global Education Management Systems) Education

Type: privately owned company

Key personnel

Founder and chairman: Sunny Varkey
Chief executive: Zenna Atkins
(previously chair of Ofsted)

Financial background

Turnover: £17.3 million (31 Aug 2009)
Operating loss: £0.9 million (31 Aug 2009)

Services provided

Part of the Varkey family holding group, GEMS Education manages an international network of schools in Europe, Asia and North America, providing education to nearly 100,000 students in 125 countries and employing 9,000 education professionals in approximately 60 schools.

It claims to be the "...largest kindergarten to grade 12 private school operator in the world".

Comment

GEMS Education originally intended to be one of the leading chains of UK independent schools acquiring a chain of 13 schools. It had to sell Kingswood College in Lancashire because the Grade 1 listed building was simply too expensive to run profitably, according to *The assignment report*.

GEMS Education intends to be a 'major player' in running the coalition government's new free schools programme. Speaking at a conference in London former chief executive, Anders Hultin, stated that "the profit motive is essential for such projects to work". He believes success is dependent upon being given autonomy from local authority control. He also said he felt England would eventually reconcile itself to privatisation in education when it saw the results. (*Times educational supplement*, 21 May 2010)

Harris Federation

Type: private, limited by guarantee, no share capital

Key personnel

Chairman: Lord Harris of Peckham
(previously chairman of Carpetright PLC, Conservative party donor and member of the House of Lords since 1996)
Chief executive: Dr Dan Moynihan

Financial background

Total incoming resources: £64.8 million
(31 Aug 2009)
Net incoming resources: £8.2 million (31 Aug 2009)

Services provided

Harris Federation currently runs 9 academies, serving approximately 20,000 pupils in south London. More academies are planned for the future.

Comment

Parliamentary written answers in December 2009 showed that the seven Harris academies open at that time had only received £3.7 million of the £8.5 million promised by Lord Harris for capital building work.

In January 2010, the Harris academy in Peckham announced that there would be a number of redundancies, primarily among support staff, due to a reduction in intake. The number of children is to be reduced from 240 to 180 from September 2010.

In February 2010, Harris Federation met with families in South Battersea and representatives of Swedish firm International English Schools to discuss the opening of the borough's first parent-run free school.

In May 2010, it was reported that Harris and other providers held talks with parent campaigners about running a new state school in Wandsworth for profit; the school will be run by the provider and not the parents.

International English Schools (Internationella Engelska Skolan or IES)

Type: Swedish shareholder company (or Aktiebolag)

Key personnel

Founder and chairman of the board:

Barbara Bergström

Deputy chairman: PG Mossberg

Chief executive: Peter John Fyles

Vice chief executive: Jörgen Stenquist

Financial background

Not yet incorporated in the UK.

Services provided

IES is a Swedish profit-making, shareholder company founded in 1993. It manages 14 free (state-funded) schools in Sweden, delivering 'international' bilingual (Swedish and English) education, with 9,000 students enrolled.

Comment

In Sweden, IES is known for its "traditional, conservative approach" to schooling, which emphasises strict discipline and high expectations for students. It has actively explored potential opportunities to enter the English free school market, after the success its rival Swedish Kunskapsskolan has had in establishing itself in England.

It was reported in January 2010 that two groups of parents had met with IES. One is a group of parents in Wandsworth who are considering using a disused hospital for the new school premises after taking advice from the New Schools Network. The other is a group of parents from Knebworth, Hertfordshire, who discussed their campaign for a secondary school to serve five rural villages.

More recently, in the summer of 2010, both the chief executive and vice chief executive visited the UK, where they met Prime Minister David Cameron and attended several meetings with senior officials from the Department for Education who are responsible for implementing the free schools model.



Kunskapsskolan (or Knowledge Schools)

Type: Swedish shareholder company
(or Aktiebolag)

Key personnel

Founder, majority shareholder and executive chairman: Peje Emilsson (Swedish Conservative party supporter, and founder, executive chairman and largest shareholder of Kreab, the leading public relations company in Sweden)

Financial background

Not yet incorporated in the UK.

Services provided

Kunskapsskolan AB was founded in Sweden in 1999. It operates internationally and has links with schools in Europe and Africa. It expanded to the UK in 2007 “with the aim of establishing their educational concept in the UK”. It manages 33 state-funded schools, free of charge and non-selective, educating more than 9,000 students in 23 secondaries (ages 12-15) and 10 upper secondaries (ages 16-19).

Comment

It is currently the proposed sponsor for two new academies in Richmond – Hampton Community College and Whitton School – and would like to have a minimum of five schools in England.

Kunskapsskolan has stated that the academies programme has provided it with “an exciting opportunity to expand the Kunskapsskolen model internationally”.

It is alleged that Kunskapsskolan makes a profit through employing fewer qualified teachers and cutting the costs of facilities. “The number of qualified teachers in independent schools is a little over 60% compared to 84% in public schools.” (National Union of Teachers, 2009)

Lilac Sky Schools

Type: private limited company

Key personnel

Founder, executive head and director: Trevor Averre-Beeson (previously the youngest secondary headteacher in the UK at Mayfield School, Redbridge, head of Islington Green School and executive head of Salisbury School in north London – for the private firm Edison Schools)

Financial background

No financial information publicly available at the time of going to press.

Services provided

Lilac Sky Schools is a private limited company, incorporated on 19 March 2009. It offers a turn-around service to schools, building on its high-profile work at Islington Green and at two other London schools. The Lilac Sky approach uses seven components: positive discipline, teaching quality, an ICT-based approach to assessment, improving the school environment, and assisting with finances, premises management and public relations.

Comment

Lilac Sky Schools has a £1 million, five-year contract to work with the local authority with an aim of ensuring that the Priory School in Taunton is taken out of special measures. While Lilac Sky will take a profit, the council remains in ultimate command. Mr Averre-Beeson has said that he is “unashamedly working to be profitable” for his shareholders but there will be no “excess” profits. (*Times educational supplement*, Nov 2009)

The New Schools Network lists Lilac Sky Schools as having expressed an interest in being involved with the new free schools.

Mouchel

Type: PLC

Key personnel

Chairman: Bo Lerenius

Financial background

Revenue: £740.6 million (31 July 2009)

Operating profit: £47.3 million (31 July 2009)

Services provided

Mouchel is a consulting and business services group to mostly public sector organisations in both the UK and overseas. It provides design, managerial and engineering services.

It also provides support services for schools: children's services support, corporate governance, learning research and evaluation, digital learning/ ICT, educational consultancy (including teaching methods), building capacity and maintenance, interim management, programme management, architecture and back office functions.

Mouchel maintains 3,000 schools and 5,000 public buildings. It has provided services to the Building Schools for the Future programme. It currently manages 13 city academy projects, and has been involved in 25 per cent of the 203 academies now open.

Comment

In Mouchel's 2009 annual report, chairman Bo Lerenius stated:

"Our range of expertise means we can take a 'learning-led' approach to such services, while offering the breadth of capability required to improve educational outcomes and to reduce the administrative burden associated with school management, positioning us well for future growth in this market...the focus of our education business continues to be on the provision of education improvement and property services, mainly via the City Academy and BSF programmes and to local authority schools generally."



Oasis Community Learning

Type: charitable trust

Key personnel

Chief executive: Steve Chalke
(founder of Oasis Trust)

Financial background

Income: £80.8 million (31 Aug 2009)
Retained for future use: £18.7 million

Services provided

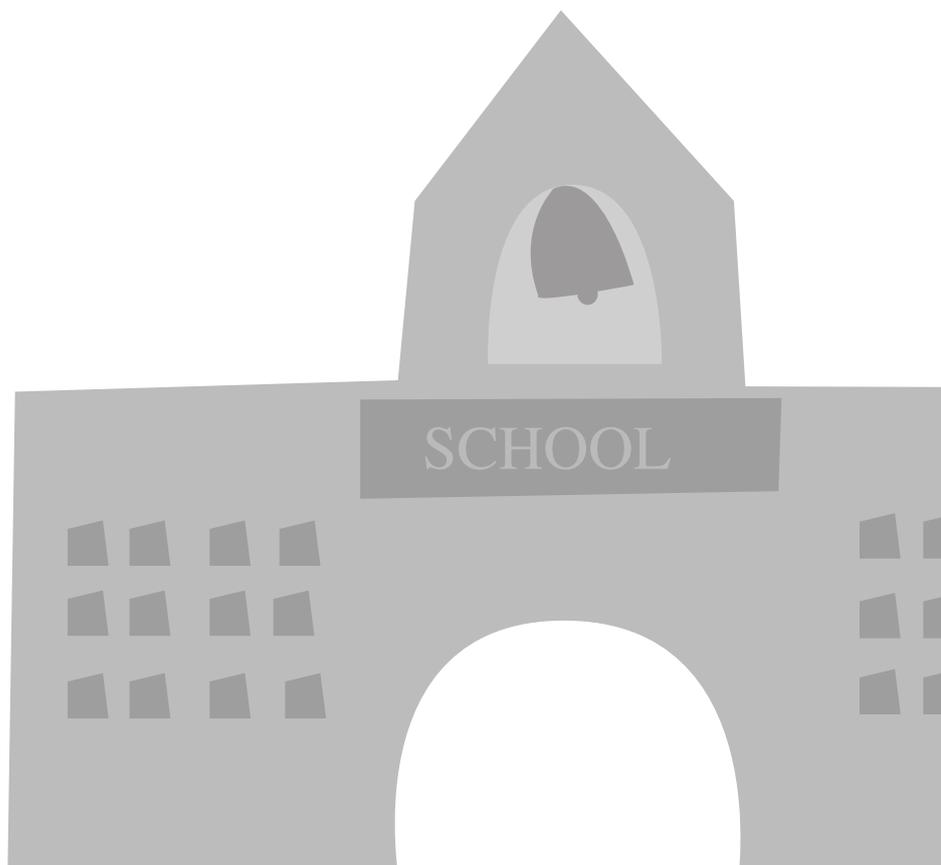
Oasis Community Learning is a charitable trust, linked to Oasis Trust, which delivers education, healthcare, housing, training and youth work projects to local authorities and national governments throughout the world. It currently runs 12 academies.

Comment

Oasis is “motivated by the life, message and example of Christ”.

In October 2008, only one month after opening, up to 150 pupils vandalised Oasis Academy Mayfield in Southampton after a pupil protest degenerated into a “rampage”. Pupils said they were unhappy because the school had not delivered its promise to improve the curriculum. They also complained that the split-site arrangement, in which they were bussed from one site to another, resulted in less contact with teachers. (*Southern daily echo*, Nov 2008) The headteacher, Ruth Johnson, stepped down before completing a term at the school.

Oasis has approached the New Schools Network to express its interest in offering help to parents and teachers who want to set up new schools.



Ormiston Trust

Type: not-for-profit social enterprise charity

Key personnel

Chief executive: Ian Cleland (also an adviser to New Schools Network)

Financial background

Total incoming resources: £1.196 million (31 Mar 2009)

Loss: £536,690 (31 Mar 2009)

Services provided

Ormiston Trust currently runs seven academies, with a further six expected to open over the next two years. It funds new developments for partner schools and gives small individual grants to its own schools.

It provides consultancy and related services to facilitate school improvement, and marketing and public relations for school providers and other non-educational businesses. It also supports new recruitment services provided by Teacher Talent Pool (TTP). TTP is a free online recruitment service for both teachers and schools.

Ormiston Trust provides diploma courses (equivalent to GCSE level) – an ‘Enterprise Capability Qualification’ – and also ‘U-Choose’, an Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN)-accredited course for disadvantaged young people.

Comment

Ormiston Trust was founded in 1969 as a grant-giving charity. Ormiston Education Trust was founded in 2006 to work with its academies.

In May 2010 the Ormiston-sponsored Shireland Collegiate Academy in Sandwell, which had previously been rated as ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted, was downgraded to ‘inadequate’ following an inspection: standards, leadership and results were judged inadequate and the governing body was overstretched.

Ormiston has approached the New Schools Network to express its interest in offering help to parents and teachers who want to set up new schools.

Pearson Education

Type: part of Pearson PLC

Key personnel

Chief executive: Marjorie Scardino
Managing director of school improvement:
Anders Hultin

Financial background

Turnover: £243.3 million (31 Dec 2009)
Gross profit: £104.3 million (31 Dec 2009)
Operating loss: £10.1 million (31 Dec 2009)

Services provided

Part of the global PLC Pearson, Pearson Education employs 37,000 people based in more than 60 countries. It publishes a wide range of books, software and online resources for primary and secondary schools, FE colleges and private training providers.

It also owns exam board Edexcel. In July 2010 it announced the establishment of a new school improvement business.

Comment

Pearson Education has contracts with five academies for textbooks, and for providing pupil assessments, teacher training and software to track pupils' academic progress and disciplinary records.

Marjorie Scardino has said of free schools:
"We would seek to help those schools, help train the teachers, write the curriculum for them, help choose what books they want to buy."

Place Group

Type: private limited company

Key personnel

Managing director: Claire Delaney

Financial background

Turnover: £8.8 million (31 Dec 2008)
Operating profit: £1.2 million (31 Dec 2008)

Services provided

Place Group supports schools in converting to academies and supports parent/teacher groups in establishing free schools. It helps groups of schools realise benefits through collaboration, and partners with trusts and social enterprises to help run schools and groups of schools. It also partners with local authorities to manage change, and with schools and school federations/chains.

Comment

Place Group has supported 40 academies. It has provided the project management, financial and educational advice to Stour Valley Education Trust to establish a free school. It is currently supporting a number of groups to set up free schools, including by means of coordinating website LinkedIn.

Serco

Type: PLC

Key personnel

Chairman: Alastair Lyons (CBE)
Chief executive: Christopher Rajendran Hyman

Financial background

Revenue: £3.97 billion (31 Dec 2009)
Operating profit: £212.1 million (31 Dec 2009)

Services provided

Serco operates in more than 30 countries, with 70,000 employees. More than 90 per cent of its business is with the public sector. It provides a variety of services in the schools sector, including libraries, ICT, inclusion services, testing and headteacher employment, to a large number of local authorities. It provides lesson planning tools.

It manages several local authorities, a range of transport services, several leisure centres and a number of Building Schools for the Future schemes.

Comment

Serco supplies academies, including those of Harris Federation, Oasis Community Learning and ARK, with a range of software and online solutions, as well as training and consultancy support.

The Birkenshaw, Birstall and Gomersal Parents' Alliance, a group of parents from 4 communities campaigning to have a 900-place 11-16-year-old free secondary school in its area, reportedly lined up Serco to run the establishment.

Bradford Council is not renewing Serco's 10-year contract to manage its education service.

Serco has approached the New Schools Network to express its interest in offering help to parents and teachers who want to set up new schools.



SCHOOL

Synarbor

Type: PLC

Key personnel

Chief executive: Dean Kelly

Financial background

Revenue: £43.4 million (31 Dec 2009)
Operating profit before exceptionals: £2.9 million (31 Dec 2009)
Operating loss: £2.8 million

Services provided

Synarbor has two subdivisions: recruitment company Synarbor Education, and Teach in, which offers a managed service for all agencies supplying to partner schools, school clusters, academies and local authorities. Managed agency agreements are set up to streamline the process of dealing with multiple agencies and third-party suppliers.

Comment

It works with school groups, trusts and prospective “free schools’ initiators, to form operational partnerships”. It works in partnership to deliver a wide range of services, including assistance with academy transformation, learning and development, leadership and procurement leverage.

TPP Law

Type: private limited company

Key personnel

Managing director: Mark Johnson

Financial background

Turnover: £1.8 million (31 Dec 2008)
Operating profit: £0.4 million (31 Dec 2008)

Services provided

TPP Law Ltd is a specialist law firm with a focus on supporting public service partnerships and projects.

Comment

TPP Law Ltd is the single professional services organisation listed on the New Schools Network website as one of the charities and companies which have approached the New Schools Network to express their interest in offering help to parents and teachers who want to set up new schools.

It is advising a number of parent-led pathfinder projects in west London, Wandsworth and Yorkshire, assisting with setting up a new corporate vehicle, and advising on contracts, funding, land transfers and employment law issues.

It is providing advice throughout the academy establishment process, including establishing the academy trust, charity issues, property issues, asset transfer, and staffing and Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 issues. It is assisting a number of community and foundation schools in their applications for academy status.

Tribal Education

Type: subsidiary of Tribal Group PLC

Key personnel

Chief executive: Peter Martin

Financial background

Turnover: £80.4 million (31 Dec 2008)
Operating profit: £7.2 million (31 Dec 2008)

Services provided

Tribal Education provides quality improvement services, including inspection, school and college improvement programmes and benchmarking, and management information systems for tracking learners. It also provides project management of large-scale education change programmes.

It operated Swindon's education service between 2002-05.

It inspects nearly half of England's nurseries.

Comment

In 2001 Tribal (as part of a consortium) withdrew from bidding for Waltham Forest's education services after allegations arose of the offer of inducements to a senior officer of the council (*The Guardian*, June 2007).

The United Learning Trust (ULT)

Type: charitable trust

Key personnel

Chief executive: Sir Ewan Harper
Patrons include the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York.

Financial background

Total income: £146 million (31 Aug 2009)
Excess of income over expenditure: £38.8 million (31 Aug 2009)

Services provided

ULT is the largest single sponsor of academies with 17 in total. Its United Learning Research Institute leads educational research across the group, including 11 fee-paying independent schools operated by the United Church Schools Trust. It provides lesson observations to support teachers in managing and exploiting IT resources.

Comment

In November 2009 the Labour government instructed ULT not to take on sponsorship of any more schools until significant improvements were seen in the existing academies already on its books. (*The Guardian*, June 2007) Ofsted cited weak leadership as the main reason for concern about the performance of three of the ULT academies. The 14 other schools it runs are deemed successful.

VT Four S

Type: joint venture company

Financial background

Turnover: £43.5 million (31 Mar 2009)
Operating profit: £2.8 million (31 Mar 2009)

Services provided

VT Four S is owned by Babcock (a PLC in engineering, aerospace and defence) and Surrey County Council. It provides facilities management including Building Schools for the Future projects, finance management, governance consultancy, workforce development (assessment of advanced skills teachers and excellent teachers higher level teaching), curriculum consultancy, 14-19 education, inclusion and special educational needs services, national strategies, extended services and training and conferences.

Comment

VT Four S (education and skills) employs more than 4,000 staff. It already co-sponsors 4 academies and plans to run up to 1,000. It is widely expected to bid for opportunities to run free schools.

don't sell education short





ATL - the education union
7 Northumberland Street
London WC2N 5RD

Tel: 020 7930 6441
Fax: 020 7930 1359

Email: info@atl.org.uk
Website: www.atl.org.uk

Cardiff

Tel: 029 2046 5000
Email: cymru@atl.org.uk

Belfast

Tel: 028 9078 2020
Email: ni@atl.org.uk

Edinburgh

Tel: 0131 272 2748
Email: scotland@atl.org.uk

ATL product code: PR33

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