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# RSA Academies

## Our Offer

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The purpose of the RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) is to unite people and ideas to resolve the challenges of our time. Our aspiration is to empower human creativity in promoting a 21st century enlightenment.

RSA

Academies

## Current structure

The RSA's long and important involvement in education entered a new phase in 2008 when it sponsored the RSA Academy, Tipton (which is now part of the Central RSA Academies Trust or CRSAAT). This Trust continues to grow as more schools join. Another Trust has plans to expand. The trusts are entirely autonomous but operate under the aegis of RSA Academies, which is constitutionally an "umbrella" trust.

RSA Academies' role as an umbrella trust is two-fold. Its governance function is to appoint Members and/or Trustees into each of the trusts, but its central purpose is to be a special purpose vehicle by means of which the values of the RSA are mediated through practical support into the individual trusts and academies.

## RSA Academies

Much of our practical support for our academies is structured around three main themes or "Commitments". The first of these relates to Arts, Culture and Creativity. We want all our pupils to enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum that inspires their passions and brings out their unique aptitudes and abilities. The second relates to the World beyond School, because we want our pupils to be well prepared for future success as life-long learners and in the workplace. And the third Commitment relates to Wellbeing and Mental Health, because we recognise the pressures that young people face, both at school and as they grow up in our complex interconnected world.

We work with our academies in delivering various activities and projects in relation to each of these Commitments. The RSA4 project, for example, gives Year 4 pupils the opportunity to engage in community action. Some projects are externally funded, for which we source grants. In addition, there are various events throughout the year such as Artsfest (in which pupils work on a "scratch"

performance) and Takeover Day, on which pupils enjoy a visit to RSA House. We aim to bring our academies' pupils together whenever we can, so that they can learn from one another and feel part of a larger community. We meet with Commitment Leads from each school from time to time to share good practice.

There is a fourth Commitment, which is implicit in everything we do: Creative Teachers. We want our schools to be places where teachers enjoy professional autonomy and are empowered to innovate, learning from research-based practice. We believe in a good work-life balance and in creating opportunities for professional development and recognition, so that all staff feel valued as individuals and part of the larger movement towards a new enlightenment.

We have developed a Partnership Framework (a tool for self-evaluation) which articulates how the academies and RSAA will work together in promoting their distinctive RSA character.

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## An RSA School

An RSA school is a school with soul. All these Commitments are expressions of our overarching philosophy, which is to give each pupil a complete and generous education embracing the traditional academic subjects, the arts and sport, and subjects that provide insights into the ethics of good living. And we want our schools to be inclusive, networked, “green” and demonstrably mission-led – by which we mean committed to the values of individual flourishing and social progress.

All these dimensions constitute the distinctive character of an RSA school. One of the features of being a networked school is the opportunity to access all the corporate and intellectual resources of the RSA including its worldwide community of 30,000 Fellows.

A more complete articulation of our philosophy is contained within the document, *What does it mean to be an RSA school?*

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## An Inclusive Ethos of Partnership

We want our academies to be part of inclusive and democratic structures. Accordingly, RSAA does not operate in a “top down”, corporate way, but rather our Multi Academy Trusts are self-governing, autonomous trusts that are able to develop their own unique characteristics. Our trusts will offer meaningful delegated authority to local governing bodies, whilst centralised services should only relate to areas of compliance, employment and procurement (where economies of scale can be achieved).

We are proud to speak of the family of RSA academies, and we expect each one of them to have its own distinctive character and to be strongly related

to the community it serves. Each trust has responsibility for its academies’ performance, but RSAA will monitor this and suggest support where it is appropriate to do so. All are bound together by the overarching values of the RSA.

The partnership between our academies and RSAA is expressed through a Memorandum of Understanding, which sets out how we will work together. RSAA charges a modest management fee for the services it provides. The RSA itself provides a Licence permitting designation as “an RSA school”.

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## Growth of the RSA Academies

We believe that we have something of unique value to offer to the education system in the UK: a distinctive voice that draws on the historic strength of the RSA, its culture and values, and seeks to enrich society through ideas and action. We are therefore seeking to expand the number of RSAA academies and academy trusts. We are especially committed to working in areas of social deprivation, but also with schools that feel a strong attraction towards the values of the RSA.

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## Support Services

The Central RSA Academies Trust has been developing its own infrastructure of central services and there is the opportunity to learn from CRSAAT's experience and to share good practice in the provision of such services – so that leaders can focus their energies on teaching and learning.